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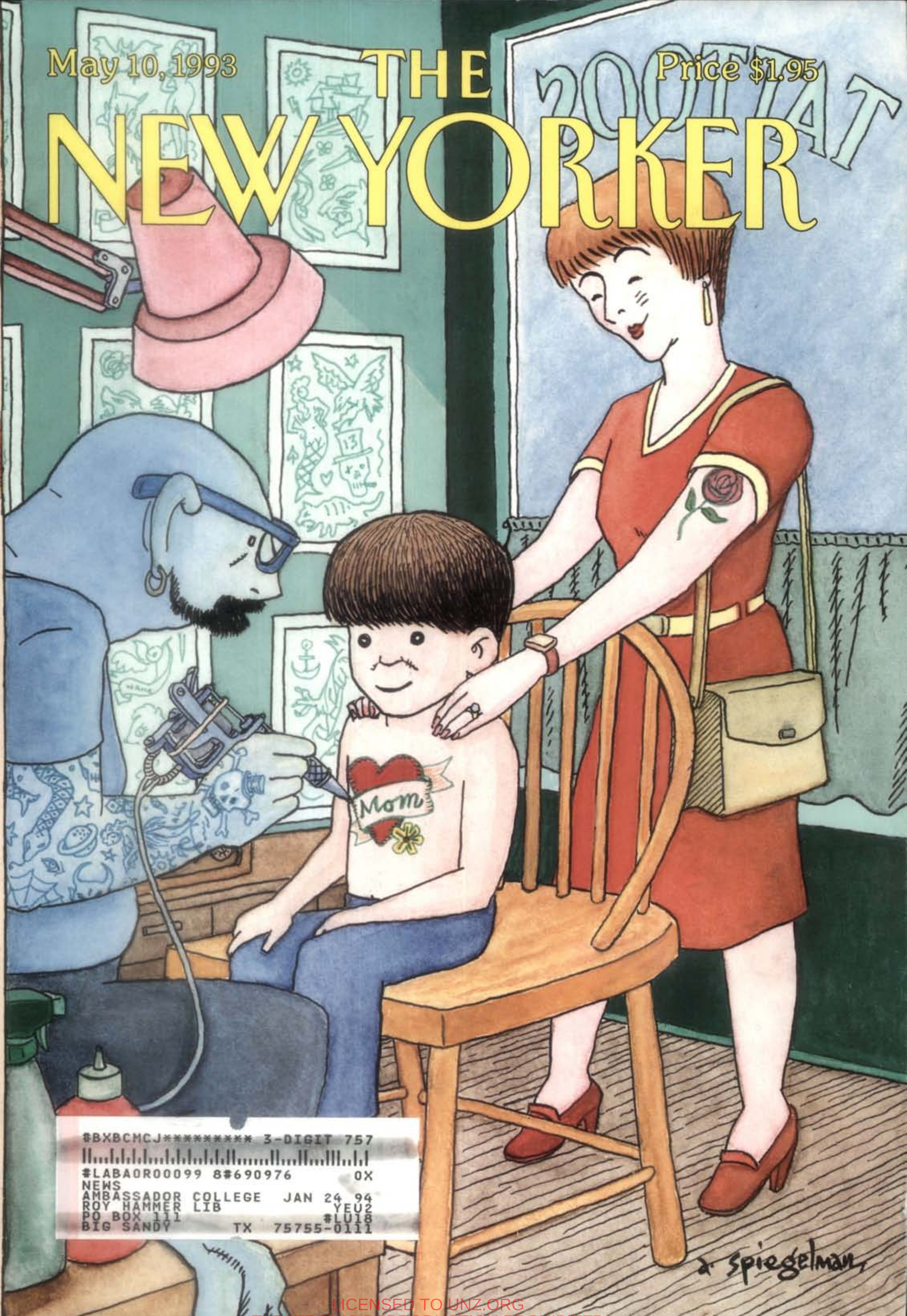
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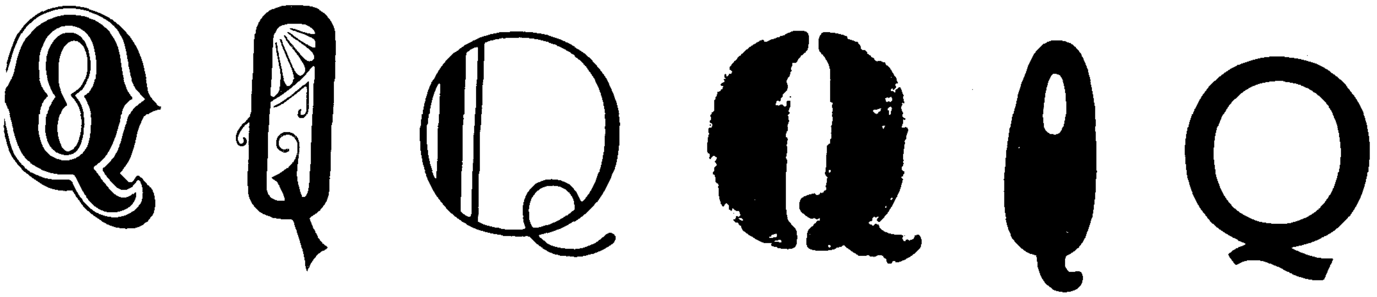

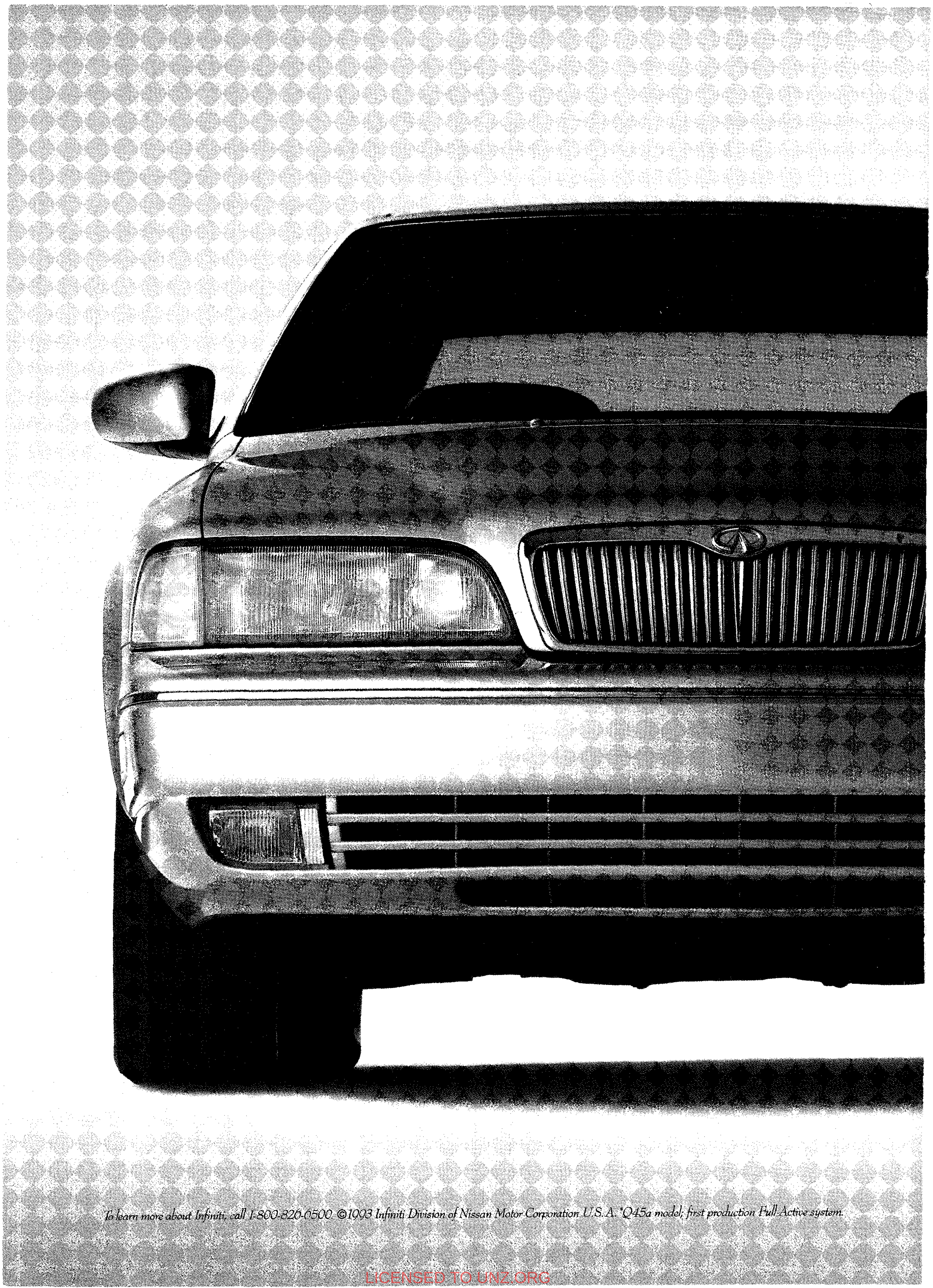

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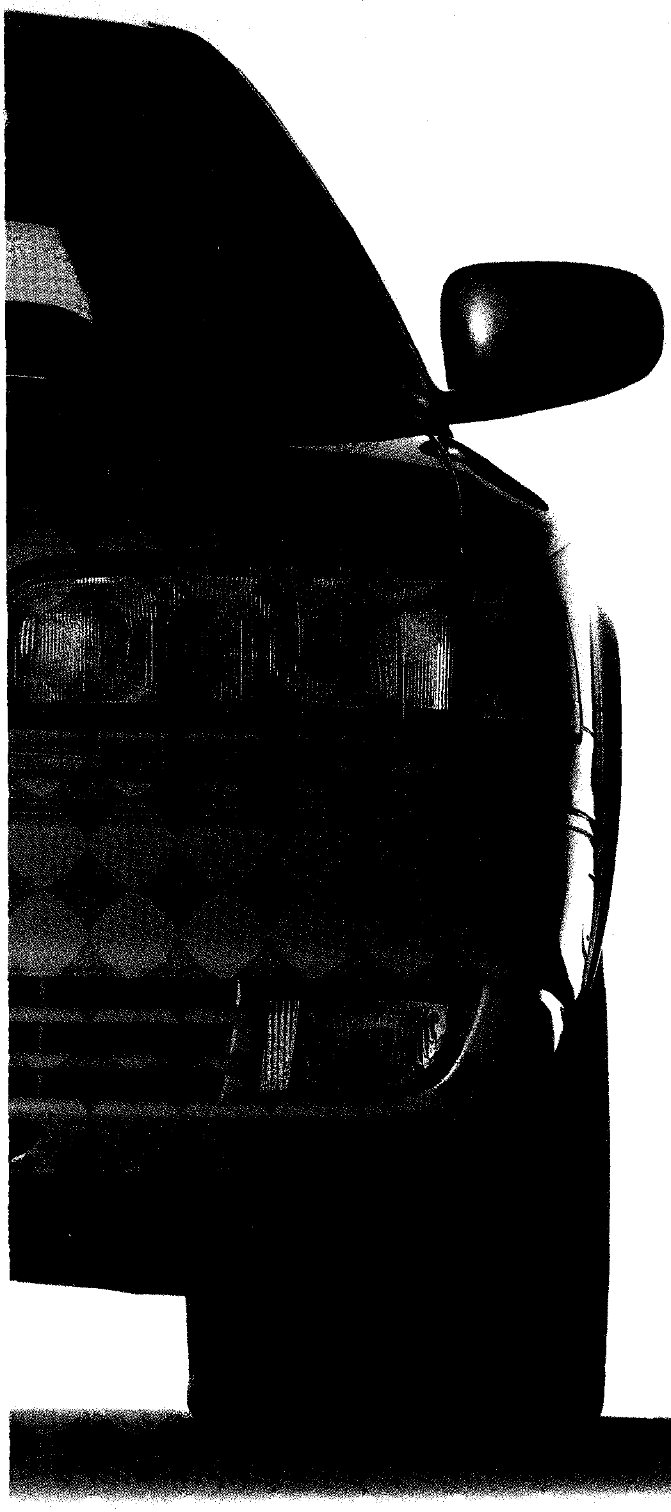

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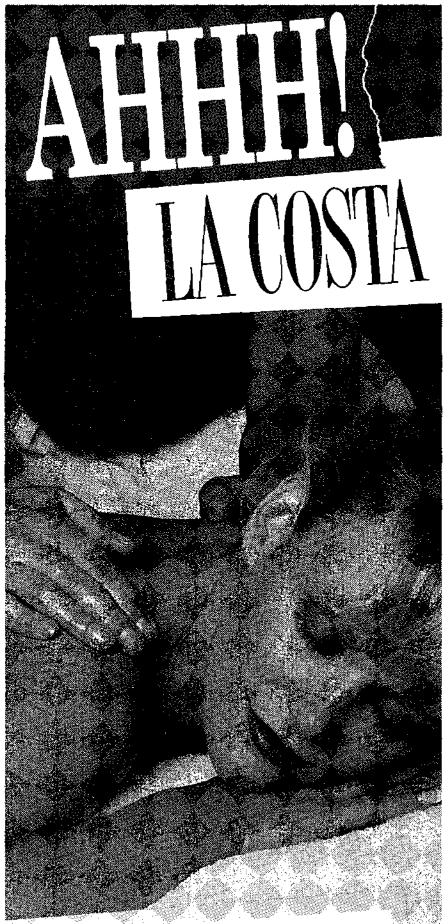

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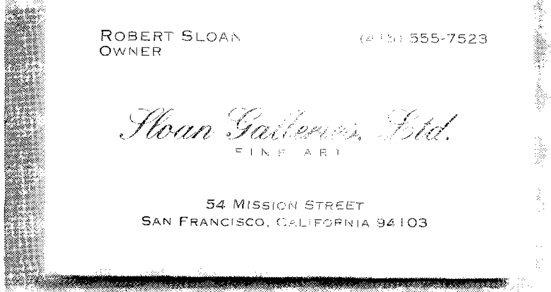
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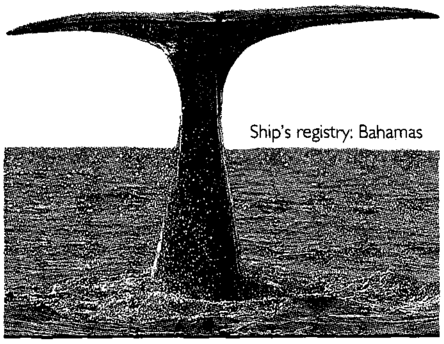

COMMENT

ADOPTION COUNTRY

THE ancient institution of adoption has been having a rough time of it lately. Starting in 1990, with a rash of reports that Romanian babies were being virtually peddled on Bucharest street corners like black-market stereos—or maybe even earlier, with the Baby M surrogacy case—the *media's coverage of incidents involving* adoption has been dominated by what P.R. people call negative images. In recent months, the stream of sad stories has seemed to become a desolating flood. The Clausen–DeBoer custody case in Michigan and Iowa, which was described comprehensively in the March 22nd issue of this magazine by Lucinda Franks, continues toward seemingly inevitable devastation for all concerned. Following it is like watching helplessly as a terrible accident happens in real-life slow motion. In another case, last July, in Connecticut, a one-year-old girl was wrested from Cindy and Jerry LaFlamme, her adoptive parents, and returned to her biological mother, Gina Pellegrino, who, before the adoption could become final, had changed her mind and decided that she wanted her daughter back. The *Times Magazine* ran a generally positive piece about Western adoptions of baby girls in China last month but drew criticism for the headline "China's Market in Orphan Girls" and other commercial language, including a subhead that referred to the infants as an "export."

Adoption touches upon the Woody Allen–Mia Farrow custody case only as a tangent, but it's a pretty unhappy one. Last week, the presiding judge in the case, Elliott Wilk, of the State Supreme Court, seemed determined to turn up the volume of the incestuous overtones of Mr. Allen's affair with one of Ms. Farrow's adopted daughters, Soon-Yi Previn. "What happens to constancy when this person who used to be the sister is now also the daddy's girlfriend?" he asked one of the battalion of testifying psychologists, alluding to the impact of the affair on Dylan, the seven-year-old adopted daughter of Allen and Farrow. "We're not at the point of sleeping with our children's sisters!" the judge declaimed the same day. In itself, Ms. Farrow's adoption of seven children is overdoing

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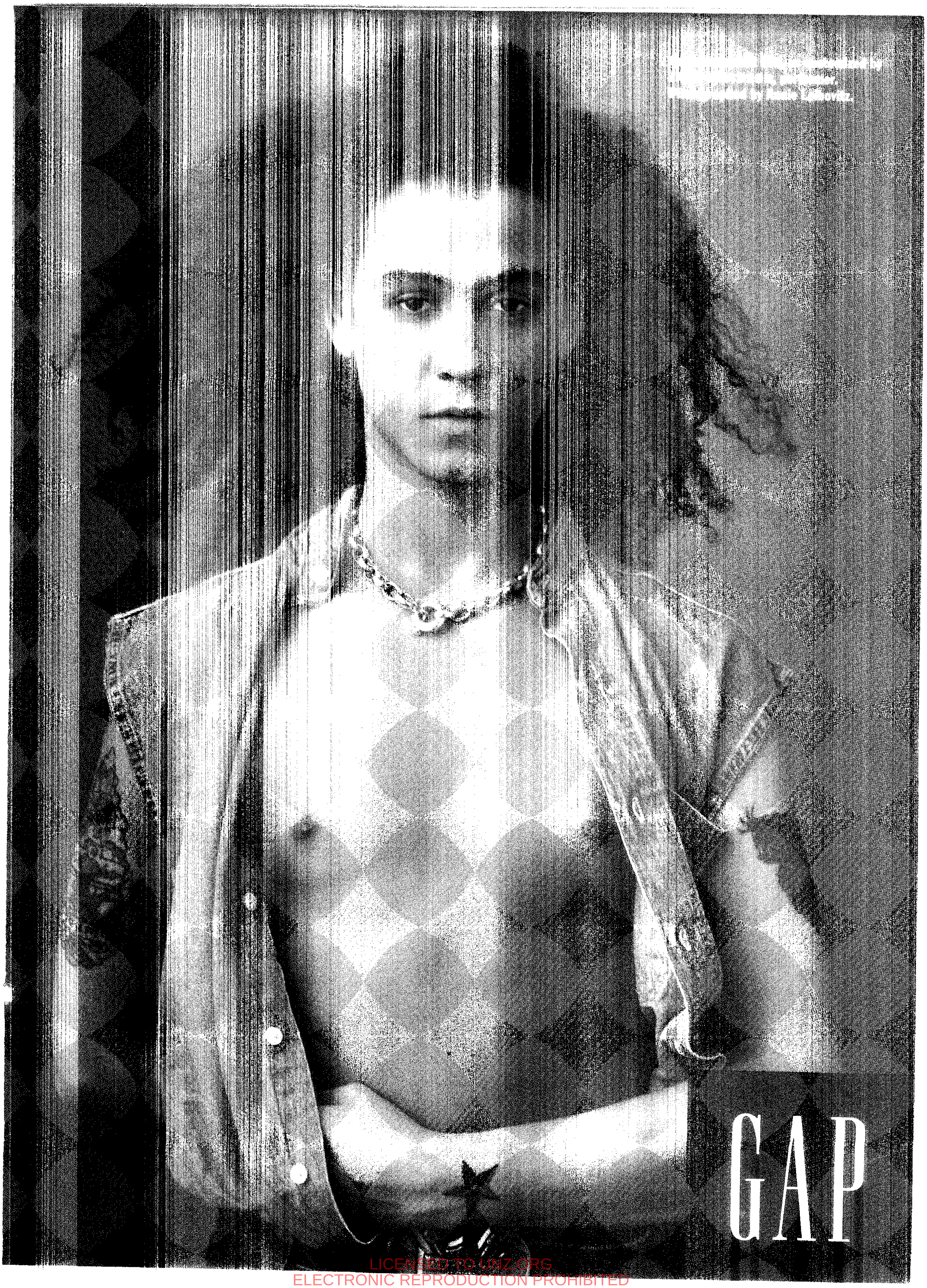
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"I see Charlayne Hunter-Gault is back from Somalia with some absolutely fabulous earrings."

• •

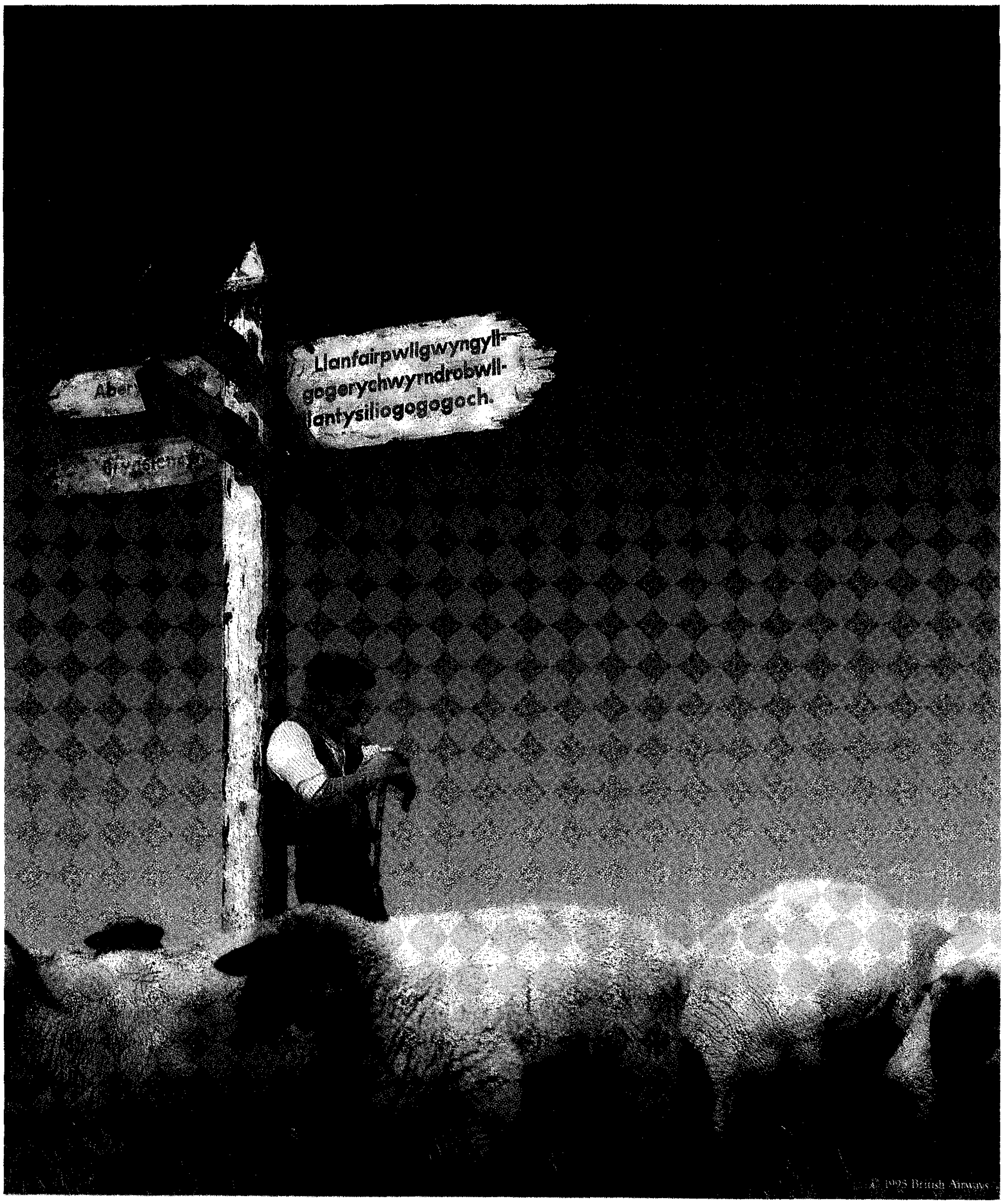
things. (You can't get an occupancy permit for a shoe on Central Park West.) Then her Decembric significant other, the father of one of her biological children, has an affair with the May-esque if not Aprilian adopted daughter of her second marriage, to André Previn—complete with Polaroid visual aids. Really! What a mess! It would be darkly funny if it were fictional—if real children weren't involved. But Judge Wilk's emphasis on Soon-Yi Previn's being Ms. Farrow's *daughter* and Dylan's *sister*, in spite of his almost prurient tone, offers at least implicit recognition of the primacy and profundity of adoptive relationships, and for that small bone, if for no other feature of this legal and human nightmare, adoptive parents and adoptees can be grateful.

Other, not so coincidental problems with adoption have been shaken loose by upheavals in social mores. With the stigma of unwed pregnancy rapidly decreasing, biological mothers are playing a more and more active part in choosing adoptive parents and in dictating the terms, generally of greater and greater openness, under which the adoption will take place. Many experts fear that this openness, which often includes full identification of everyone involved, and sometimes even visitation rights, may confuse children about who their psychological parents are. Destigmatization has also brought forward a second, hitherto notoriously elusive population—biological fathers—as another country heard from in legal disputes. And, finally, new understanding of the importance of genetic factors in human personality and health may be giving new zeal to groups such as Concerned United Birthparents, many of whose members view adoption, especially confidential adoption, as a kind of class exploitation that results in genealogical trauma. (Maybe so, but if that's always the case, then Jim Palmer has been traumatized into baseball's Hall of Fame, James Michener has been repeatedly traumatized to the top of the best-seller lists, and Steven Jobs has been traumatized into revolutionizing the computer industry.) Last week alone, *Newsweek* and the *Times'* "Week in Review" ran pieces about such vexing trends in adoption.

It would take a book—a very smart and sane book—to deal with these matters and come to the aid of the parties to adoption, and, on the bright side of coincidence, someone is about to publish it: "Family Bonds: Adoption and the Politics of Parenting." The author is Elizabeth Bartholet, a Harvard Law School professor and the mother of three sons, one biological and two adopted. Ms. Bartholet challenges nearly every negative assumption about adoption, and argues persuasively that the assumptions may themselves be the chief causes of the bad results they predict. She cites recent, groundbreaking studies of early-age adoptions that show "no significant disadvantages of adoptive as opposed to biologic parenting, and some significant advantages." (This finding is perfectly consonant with common sense, inasmuch as adoptive parents are always, by definition, parents by choice.) While acknowledging the grief and loss that are the prelude to many adoptions, Ms. Bartholet believes that a lot of the clouds now shadowing the process might dissipate with some sensible and overdue alterations in social attitudes toward infertility, toward what does and doesn't constitute a family, and toward governmental regulations. Furthermore—Well, it does indeed take a book. Ms. Bartholet may not have all the answers, but she does make it clear that adoption deserves to be fixed when and where it's broken, and promoted when it makes sense, which is to say when people who conceive children can't raise them and people who can't conceive them would make suitable parents. Both the courage and trust of those who decide to place their babies for adoption and the enthusiasm of those who adopt them are overwhelmingly vindicated by the tens of thousands of successful adoptions that take place in this country every year.

The United States might be said to have a special interest in the maintenance and repair of adoption: metaphorically, at least, adoption is what made America great, for America's very nationhood is adoptive. The vast migrations that populated this continent, the uprootings and replantings and recombinings of people and peoples (sometimes in sorrow, sometimes in hope) that, far more than ties of biological kinship, created the American nation, can be seen as a historical experiment in mass geographical adoption. (Perhaps this helps explain why terms like "fatherland" and "motherland" give Americans the creeps.) And, while we honor old ties, a substantial part of our very identity consists in the ability to transcend them with new ones—in the power that the heart has over the blood. ♦

When traveling to Britain go with someone who speaks the language.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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

Behind Blue Eyes

MICHAEL CERVERIS, who plays Tommy in the musical of (nearly) the same name, at the St. James, has the résumé of a very modern rocker. He went to Exeter and Yale. His father was a music professor. His first stage appearance was in a production of Brecht. More and more, this brand of high-mindedness seems crucial for rock-related success. Look at Sting. Or Suzanne Vega. Best of all, look at Pete Townshend, the brains behind "Tommy." The most famous book editor since Jackie O., he must have sensed in Cerveris a kind of intellectual kinship. And a spiritual one, too: prior to the show's Broadway run, Townshend took Cerveris to London to meet Delia De Leon, an actress and an inspirational figure in the musician's life. "She died just after I arrived in town, before we could actually meet," Cerveris says. "But she had an effect."

There were other rites of preparation for his performance as that deaf-dumb-and-blind boy. "I watched 'Kaspar Hauser' and 'The Elephant Man.' I listened to people like Billy Bragg to get a sense of singing with a definite English accent." The rock scene is not foreign to Cerveris. In fact, both in Los Angeles—where he was a regular on "Fame"—and in New York, the blue-eyed thirty-two-year-old actor likes to hang out at rock clubs. "Rock singers are the real celebrity performers," Cerveris says. "Like Broadway stars used to be."

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

And Baby Makes Seven—Cherry Jones, Peter Frechette, and Mary Mara head the cast of a play by Paula Vogel. Presented by Circle Rep. Preview on May 5. Opens May 6 at 8. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—The 1993 marathon of one-act plays kicks off with "Bed and Breakfast," by Richard Dresser; "Long Ago & Far Away," by David Ives; "Iron Tommy," by James Ryan; and "Jackie," by David Rasche. This series starts May 5 at 7:30 and runs through May 16. The marathon continues until June 13. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405.)

Later Life—In A. R. Gurney's new play, a man and woman who haven't seen each other in thirty years meet up again. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Lypsinka! A Day in the Life—John Epperson brings his fabulous lip-synching alter ego to Off Broadway. This show was seen last season at New York Theatre Workshop. Opens May 5 at 8. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Marisol—Cordelia Gonzalez and Danitra Vance in a play by José Rivera. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

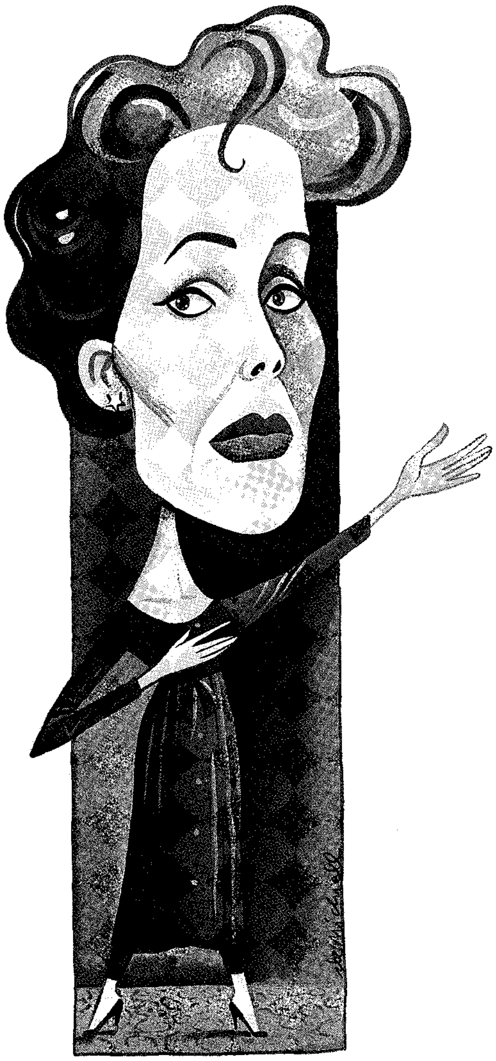
Negro Ensemble Company—After a two-season hiatus, the troupe returns with LAST NIGHT AT ACE HIGH, a play by Kenneth Franklin Hoke-Witherspoon. In previews. (LaGuardia Performing Arts Center, LaGuardia Community College, Queens. 1-718 482-5151.)

Playboy of the West Indies—Mustapha Matura's 1984 adaptation of the J. M. Synge play. Previews through May 8. Opens May 9 at 7:30. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden—Presenting two plays directed by Ingmar Bergman: Ibsen's PEER GYNT (May 11-15) and Yukio Mishima's MADAME DE SADE (May 20-22). Both are performed in Swedish; simultaneous English translation, via headsets, is available. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

Time on Fire—Actor Evan Handler's comic account of his successful fight against leukemia. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Wild Men!—George Wendt stars in a musical comedy by Peter Burns, Mark Nutter, Tom Wolfe, and Rob Riley. Preview on May 5. Opens May 6 at 6:45. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)



Lynn Redgrave in "Shakespeare for My Father."

ROBERT DEMICHIELL

OPENED RECENTLY

Ain't Broadway Grand—This musical, a limp salute to Mike Todd, is not a total disaster, but it comes close. There is energetic tap dancing by the chorus, which is lively enough, and Merwin Goldsmith gives a very funny performance as the quintessential waiter at Lindy's. That's about all, though. Perhaps the most serious insult is that to the memory of Bobby Clark, who is played far too broadly; Clark was a sophisticated comedian, not a burlesque comic. Score by Mitch Leigh, book by Thomas Meehan and Lee Adams, and lyrics by Mr. Adams. (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Angels in America: Millennium Approaches—The first half of Tony Kushner's epic work is set in 1985, at the height of the Reagan counter-revolution, and it maps the trickle-down effect of self-interest as Kushner's characters ruthlessly pursue their private and public destinies. The Pulitzer Prize-winning play is a saga about sexual politics, death, and decay. Not to be missed. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Another Time—Ronald Harwood's family drama presents a Jewish piano prodigy, at fifteen (in South Africa) and fifty-one (in London). The cast members—Malcolm McDowell (in a dual role as the young musician's father and as the musician himself in middle age), Joan Copeland, Marian Seldes, Michael Lombard, and James Waterston (as the teen-age prodigy)—are terrific, and occasionally manage to transform material that is hobbled by hackneyed language and cumbersome staging into something worth watching. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes May 9.)

Back to Bacharach and David—A fizzy, perfectly pitched new musical revue devoted to the songs Burt Bacharach and Hal David wrote in their prime. The singers are Melinda Gilb, Steve Gunderson, Sue Mosher, and Lillias White. Kathy Najimy directed. (Club 53, at the New York Hilton, Sixth Ave. at 53rd St. 261-5853.)

Blood Brothers—Willy Russell's long-running London musical has crossed the Atlantic. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A Couple of Blaguards—The actors Frank and Malachy McCourt reminisce about their Irish childhood. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318. Closes May 22.)

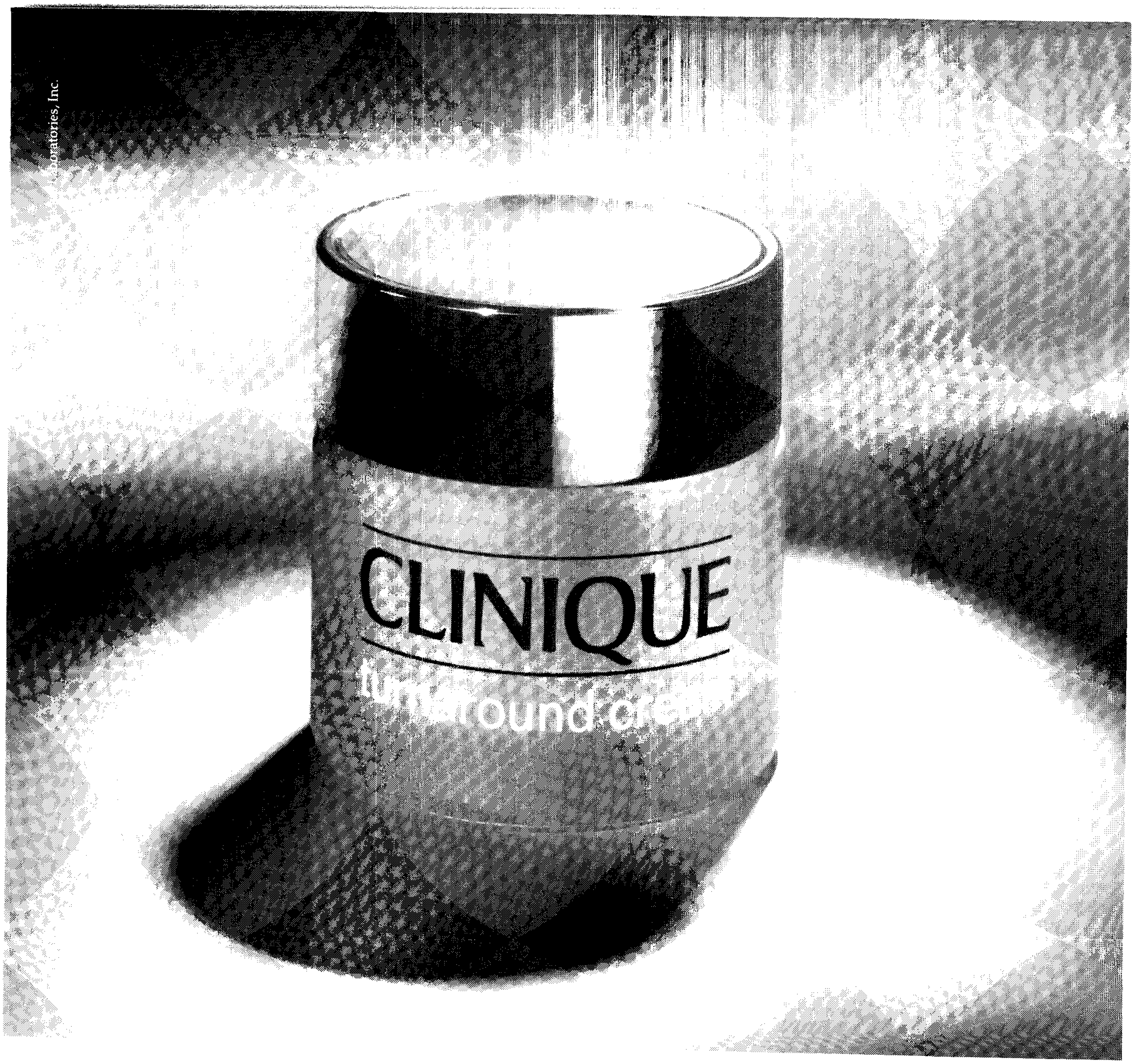
A Doll House—The Pan Asian Repertory Theatre offers John R. Briggs' adaptation of the Ibsen play. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Closes May 22.)

Fool Moon—Bill Irwin and David Shiner are the inspired clowns in a show that is perfection itself. The only sound you'll hear is the merry music of the Red Clay Ramblers and the abundant laughter of the audience. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/8/93.) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

Forbidden Broadway 1993—Once again, a galaxy of parodies that sharpen into satire. This edition is as funny as most of its predecessors. Among the new shows under consideration are "Guys and Dolls" and "Falsettos," and the holdovers include "Les Misérables" and "The Phantom of the Opera." Gerard Alessandrini, as if you had to be told, is the clever writer and director, and Susanne Blakeslee, Dorothy Kiara, Brad Oscar, and Craig Wells are the splendid performers, doing a large assortment of roles. (1/25/93) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

The Goodbye Girl—Bernadette Peters and Martin Short, two brilliant, funny stars, transform this otherwise indifferent musical adaptation of Neil Simon's movie into a sporadically festive evening. The dances by Graciela Daniele are more than helpful, as is the comic support by John Christopher Jones. Score by Marvin Hamlisch, lyrics by David Zippel. Michael Kidd directed. (3/15/93) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh—A musical based on the song parodies of Allan Sherman and



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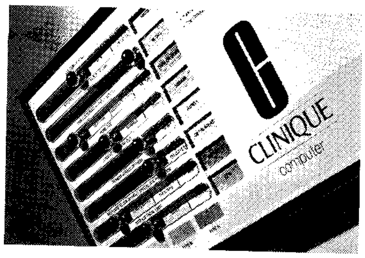

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offering further proof that Camp Lite is taking over Off Broadway. The show was conceived and written by Douglas Bernstein and Rob Krausz. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

The Hunchback of Notre Dame—A musical by Byron Janis (score), Hal Hackady (lyrics), and Anthony Scully (book). (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391. Closes May 15.)

Jeffrey—A comedy, by Paul Rudnick, about love in the age of AIDS; with John Michael Higgins. It is less a fleshed-out play than a series of Scenes from Gay Life, but Mr. Rudnick can quip with the best of them. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 420-8000.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman—A musical by John Kander (score), Fred Ebb (lyrics), and Terrence McNally (book), which was directed by Harold Prince. It is based on the 1976 Manuel Puig novel and stars Chita Rivera, Brent Carver, and Anthony Crivello. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Linda—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company goes West in this farcical melodrama about gays and the religious right in Colorado after the passage of its homophobic Amendment Two. The book, despite occasional clunkiness, includes some great lines, and the songs are inspired and tremendously funny. Everett Quinton (who co-wrote the lyrics) and Brenda Cummings are outstanding among the cast, which is no mean feat. And the props and costumes alone—cowboy outfits, clerical garb, and big hair—are worth a trip downtown. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

Oleanna—David Mamet, in fine, curmudgeonly form, takes on political correctness, sexual harassment, and a number of other topics in this brief, powerful drama that continues to stir up the ideologues. The play's skepticism is as evenhanded as it is corrosive. Treat Williams and Mary McCann make up the cast. (11/16/92) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100.)

Putting It Together—This celebration of Stephen Sondheim's music features Julie Andrews, Stephen Collins, Christopher Durang, Michael Rupert, and Rachel York. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes May 23.)

The Second Annual Heart O' Texas Eczema Telethon—A comedy by Mark Dunn. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226.)

Shakespeare for My Father—Lynn Redgrave's show about her relationship with her pater, the actor Michael Redgrave. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

The Sisters Rosensweig—Wendy Wasserstein's new play, a comedy with serious undertones, is about the reunion in London of three American Jewish sisters—an international banker, a travel writer, and a wife and mother who's a professional dispenser of advice. They are portrayed by Jane Alexander, Christine Estabrook, and Madeline Kahn. The spirit of Chekhov hovers but never intrudes. Laughter is continuous. (11/2/92) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Someone Who'll Watch Over Me—Michael York (English), Stephen Rea (Irish), and Chuck Cooper (American) portray hostages in Beirut in Frank McGuinness's moving and humorous play. Robin Lefèvre directed. (12/7/92) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Song of Jacob Zulu—Ladysmith Black Mambazo, a nine-man a-cappella group from South Africa, serves as the chorus in this new play by Tug Yourgrau. Jacob, compellingly played by K. Todd Freeman, is a righteous Christian teen-ager who gives up the hope of immortality in the next world for revolutionary immortality in this one. Unfortunately, the first song broadcasts the outcome of Jacob's fate, so the audience spends the rest of the evening biding its time; the show only really acquires oxygen and size in its all too few scenes with Ladysmith Black Mambazo. (4/12/93) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Tango Pasión—A new dance musical, with a number of Argentine singers and dancers making their New York débuts. Sexteto Mayor, from "Tango Argentino," is the orchestra. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Three Hotels—A new play by Jon Robin Baitz, with Christine Lahti and Ron Rifkin. Joe Mantello directed. (Circle Repertory Company, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

Three Men on a Horse—A revival, in not quite mint condition, of a comedy by John Cecil Holm and George Abbott, which is just as funny now as it must have been in 1935, when it was originally done. The performance is far too busy and campy, and the casting of Tony Randall as the hero, a young greeting-card writer with the gift of doping out winning horses at local races, is not exactly inevitable. Nevertheless, the play is impregnable, and the presence of Jerry Stiller, as a tout, helps immeasurably. (5/3/93) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280.)

The Who's Tommy—The Pinball Wizard comes to Broadway. Pete Townshend and director Des McAnuff have adapted the classic rock opera for the stage. (5/3/93) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Widowers' Houses—Bernard Shaw's first play. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes May 9.)

Wilder, Wilder, Wilder—Three one-acters by the invaluable Thornton—"The Long Christmas Dinner," "Pullman Car Hiawatha," and, best of all, "The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden." The actors, though most of them are comparatively inexperienced, do a very good job, so the real star of the occasion is Edward Berkeley, the director. (12/21/92) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Wrong Turn at Lungfish—The play owes more to day-in, day-out television than it does to the theatre. Tony Danza, making his New York stage début, deserves a better part under happier circumstances. (3/8/93) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **FALSETTOS:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **JELLY'S LAST JAM:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **THE NIGHT LARRY KRAMER KISSED ME:** Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 564-8038. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.

ANGELA ARNET

DANCE

All About Nureyev

THE documentary filmmaker Patricia Foy's newest work, "Nureyev," is to be televised on PBS's Great Performances on May 7. During a recent visit to New York from her home, in London, Ms. Foy explained that the idea for the film arose during production of her 1991 documentary on Margot Fonteyn. "Rudolf wanted to appear in that," she said. "I knew him pretty well, so I wrote him, saying, 'I would dearly love to make a similar film about you, just to keep the balance of power.' "

The film provides some piercing insights into the dancer's Russian childhood, which was a kind of brutal fairy tale of poverty and eventual escape. There is also extraordinary performance footage. Even if you think you've heard the last word on this dancer, take a look. There was more to him than his eccentricities, his fame, his liaisons, and his vanity. Underlying all was a volcanic, self-preserving will, from which a true artistry was born.

New York City Ballet—The Balanchine Celebration. May 5 at 8: "Apollo," "Prodigal Son," and "Serenade.". . . ¶ May 6 at 8: "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue," "Concerto Barocco," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2.". . . ¶ May 7 at 8: "Apollo," "La Sonnambula," and "The Four Temperaments.". . . ¶ May 8 at 2: "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2," "Serenade," and "Theme and Variations.". . . ¶ May 8 at 8: "Haieff Divertimento," "Symphonie Concertante," "Theme and Variations," and "Symphony in C.". . . ¶ May 9 at 1: "Prodigal Son," "The Four Temperaments," and "La Sonnambula.". . . ¶ May 9 at 7: "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2," "Haieff Divertimento," "Symphonie Concertante," and "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue.". . . ¶ May 11 at 8: "Serenade," "Prodigal Son," and "Symphony in C." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 27.)

American Ballet Theatre—May 5 at 2 and 8, and May 6 at 8: "The Sleeping Beauty.". . . ¶ May 7 and May 10 at 8, and May 8 at 2 and 8: "Etudes," "The Other," and "The Rite of Spring.". . . ¶ May 11 at 8: "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," duet from "Concerto Six Twenty-Two," "Voluntaries," and "Serious Pleasures." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through June 12.)

Trisha Brown Dance Company—Final performances of the engagement. May 5 at 8: "Line Up," "Homemade," "Accumulation," "Glacial Decoy," and "Set and Reset.". . . ¶ May 6 at 8: "Astral Converted (50")" and "For M.G.: The Movie.". . . ¶ May 7 at 8: "Foray Forêt," "One Story as in falling," and "Newark.". . . ¶ May 8 at 2: "Set and Reset," "Opal Loop," and "Lateral Pass.". . . ¶ May 8 at 8: "Set and Reset" and "Astral Converted (50").". . . ¶ May 9 at 3: "Lateral Pass," "Another Story as in falling," and "For M.G.: The Movie." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Parsons Dance Company—In an engagement that includes the New York première of "Destined." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. May 5-7 at 8, May 8 at 2 and 8, and May 9 at 2 and 7:30.)

NIGHT LIFE

Hanging Tough

WARREN ZEVON finally looks as beat-up and weary-wise as the renegades, mercenaries, lounge lizards, and romantic losers he's been singing about, in his forceful, husky baritone, since the mid-seventies. The forty-six-year-old singer-songwriter is no longer the baby-faced reprobate he was in the heyday of Southern California rock, when Linda Ronstadt and Jackson Browne were defining mellow while Zevon sang about havoc, weaponry, and werewolves. His career hit the skids for a while in the eighties, and the consequences of the gonzo life caught up with him (an experience he wrote about in a song called "Detox Mansion"), but Zevon hung tough, avoided becoming a self-parody, and kept on writing passionate, smart, funny material. These days, his face has plenty of character, and his specs and ponytail and thousand-yard stare reinforce the impression that this is a guy who used to do something illegal for a living.

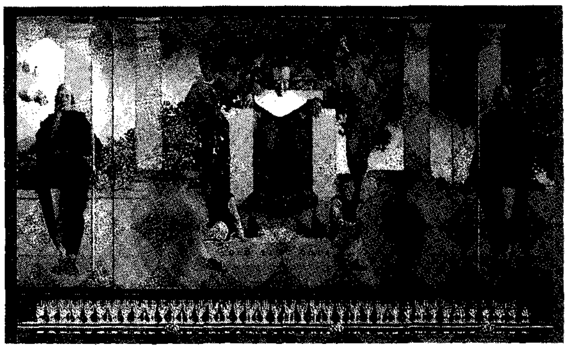
Zevon's newest album, "Learning to Flinch," is a departure from his other recent releases, which have all been wild, noisy, electric affairs. It's a live solo album that was recorded last year on a world tour, and the performances highlight the wit, intelligence, and eloquent unwholesomeness of his work. The album also captures the enthusiasm with which audiences receive the geographical references found throughout his globe-trotting songs. For example, during his bloodcurdling "Roland the Headless Thompson Gunner," which was recorded in Oslo, the crowd lets out a great Viking cheer after Zevon stoutly delivers the line about Roland being "Norway's bravest son." Zevon will doubtless plug in a few local place-names when he reprises his solo show at Tramps on May 6.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**TOVAH FELDSHUH** is currently appearing in the Oak Room. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek, green-walled room where cabaret diva **INGRID CAVEN** is appearing through May 9. Sprung from the lineage of Dietrich and Piaf, Caven recalls both: her voice tends toward Dietrich's baritonal moan, sometimes groping about in a sort of Schoenbergian *Sprechgesang*, but occasionally its edge is sharpened with Piaf's implosive intensity. She draws on their repertoire, too, though much of her material was custom-made by composer Peer Raben, to lyrics by the late filmmaker Rainer Werner Fassbinder, to whom Caven was briefly married. Closed Mondays.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Once you push past the crowds, you're likely to find yourself face to face with some of the biggest names in jazz.



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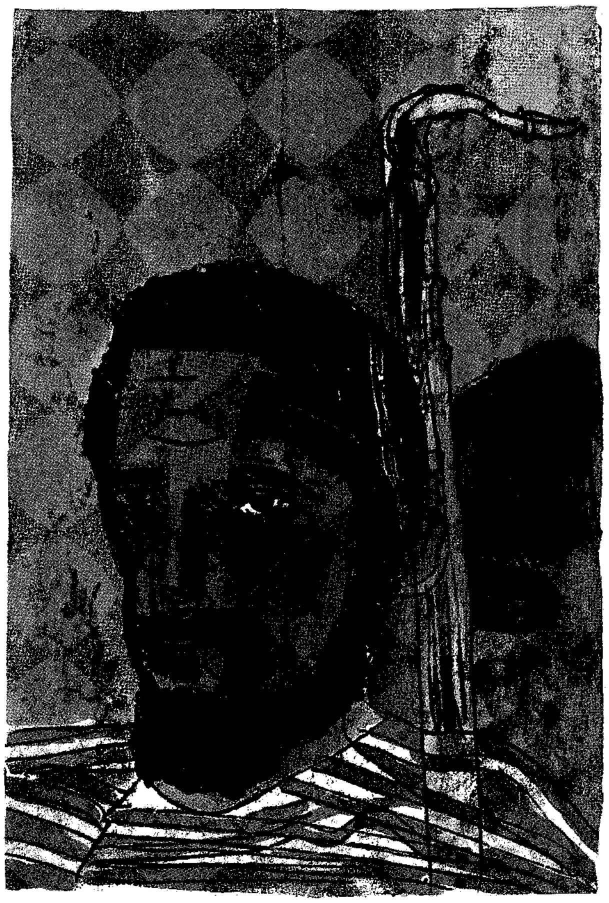
NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

OSCAR PETERSON'S quartet performs through May 9. Notes, notes, and still more notes. Someone put eighty-eight keys on his instrument and pianist Oscar Peterson is determined to use each one in every solo he plays. Virtuosity aside, Peterson also fascinates with his stylistic eclecticism; bounding keyboard runs speak Bop, the foursquare rhythms that encase them cry Swing. The pianist is backed by a sterling rhythm section. Guitarist Herb Ellis loves the infectious Midwestern blues strain that originated with Charlie Christian, bassist Ray Brown combines a gorgeous woody tone with perfect time, and drummer Jeff Hamilton performs with valiant grace. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Once the rock-and-folk showcase of choice, this club has become more unpredictable, scattershot, and mysterious in its ways. Coping with the crowded, kindergarten-scale seating is still the necessary trade-off for enjoying the room's beloved intimacy. (Old-timers speak of being baptized with Springsteen's sweat.) May 7-8: **SONNY ROLLINS.** Rollins, the majestic tenor saxophonist with hermitic tendencies, averages only one New York City gig a year. His uptown blowouts at Carnegie Hall, where he chastens those hornmen foolhardy enough to stand alongside him, have become virtual religious rites—the shaman is expected to produce magic, and he never disappoints. The Bottom Line shows run the risk of being more prosaic, but the gamble is worth it. Only a handful of jazz soloists have had Rollins' ability to manipulate rhythms, making each mercurial saxophone chorus as much a dance as it is music. (Proof can be found on everything from Rollins' landmark fifties recordings to his rollicking and magnificently sweet solo at the end of the Rolling Stones' 1981 "Waiting on a Friend.")



Sonny Rollins at the Bottom Line.

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Next door, there's a bustling, garishly lit grocery. Within the narrow walls of this venerable piano-and-bass preserve, however, everything is easy on the eyes and ears. Through May 8: **EDDIE HENDERSON, GEORGE CABLES,** and **DAVID WILLIAMS.** Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is currently home to **BOBBY SHORT.** . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano.

Denim and Diamonds, 511 Lexington Ave., at 48th St. (371-1600)—A new club whose emblem might be the full-size Western saddle, covered with tiny mirrors, that spins above the dance floor. The décor also features wagon wheels, lassos, and cowhide-backed bar stools. Denim and Diamonds offers early-evening lessons not only in the two-step but in line dances with more intimidating names, like the Sixteen-Step, the Cotton-Eyed Joe, and the Tush-Push. Once the real action starts and the boots begin thundering, there are occasional collisions and even spills on the dance floor, but helpful professionals are poised to lift you up, brush you off, and put you back in the saddle.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—A softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. Vocalist **JONATHAN SCHWARTZ** is in action with a trio through May 9. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Dining.

Five Spot, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—The latest entrant in the jazz-club sweepstakes. Set in a mammoth turn-of-the-century ballroom, the space is all marble and gilt, with a few modern touches, such as the zebra-patterned carpeting in the V.I.P. room upstairs. **SPECIAL EFX** and **JEFF LORBER** work out through May 9. Dining.

Grand, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—The former home of the gone and forgotten Cat Club. The new owners have given the space a much-needed facelift—more bars, a paint job, a new stage, and a thumping sound system. Only the velvet rope out front remains. May 7: **TUMBLING DICE,** with Mick Taylor, Bobby Keys, and Ivan Neville.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—The club most likely to feature an electric-rake player. On May 7, **ZAHAR,** with **HASSAN HAKMOUN,** will take the stage and, on May 8, **GODS AND MONSTERS.**

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A bright spot on the square-by-definition Upper East Side club scene. May 7-8: **EDDIE KIRKLAND** and the Energy Band.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—The bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. **VELOCITY GIRL,** the Swirlies, and Desire perform on May 7. Velocity Girl is an indie band creeping up on wider fame. The quartet, led by vocalist Sarah Shannon, formed at the University of Maryland in the late eighties. Their recent début album, "Copacetic," on the Sub Pop label, is a collection of appealing pop songs roughed up by skittish guitar noise and unpredictable turns. In concert, the group tends to accentuate its tougher side. May 8 belongs to **ELEVENTH DREAM DAY** and Drizzle. The former group, which formed in Chicago in 1983, has an unusual amount of guitar firepower, with which they can transform a simple, well-crafted pop song into a barrage of swirling emotions. When they perform here, they'll concentrate on material from their fine recent release, "El Moodio."

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—The main dining room strives for the appearance of a British pub but looks more like a good old American family restaurant. **NANCY MARANO** and **EDDIE MONTEIRO** are currently on hand. She sings and he accompanies with his voice and accordion—two voices intertwined with a sixty-four piece orchestra. There is no more lyrical, subtle, and exhilarating jazz-cabaret group than this New York duo. Closed Sundays.

Paddy Reilly's Music Bar, 495 Second Ave., at 28th St. (686-1210)—This Irish outpost has become known as the birthplace of the roots-and-rebellion rock band Black 47, which acknowledged its paternity by putting a picture of the joint on the cover of its new album, "Fire of Freedom." Prepare for packed crowds, flowing Guinness, and an Irish-hootenanny atmosphere. **BLACK 47** usually plays on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for "Big Sky") performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights. When there is no live music, the jukebox blasts everything from the Chieftains to Greg Trooper to Paddy Reilly, the Irish folksinger who owns the bar.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs, well, a *lot.* **KAREN AKERS** finishes a run on May 8. Closed Mondays.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Upstairs, there's a small, red-gold-and-green cabaret. **AMANDA MC BROOM** is appearing for three weeks (Thursdays through Saturdays, beginning on May 6), bringing her warmhearted personality to bear on a show called "Shoes and Other Songs of Love," its title alluding to her delightful song about how footwear never lets you down. Her most famous song is "The Rose," the title song of the Bette Midler movie; and Barbara Cook has been championing another McBroom classic-to-be, "Ship in a Bottle." (Her second show, "Midnight Matinée," will occupy the late slots on Fridays and Saturdays.) **ELLEN KAYE,** who sings standards, rock, and blues, will offer musical Mother's Day fare on May 9. The booking is especially apt when you consider that she recently embarked on motherhood herself, and that her own mom, Faith Stewart-Gordon, owns the place. For three Monday nights in May (starting May 10), the high-voltage vocalist **JULIE BUDD** will present a musical salute to Dorothy Fields. Since Barbra doesn't get around much anymore, Julie will do just fine, thank you. Dining.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—The closest thing in Manhattan to a rain forest. The live music at this venerable club is primarily from Africa, Brazil, and the Caribbean, and the dance floor is usually hopping. May 5-6: **BAABA MAAL.** May 7: **KANDA BONGO MAN.** May 8: **BRAZILIAN ENERGY.** May 10: **EDDIE PALMIERI.** Dining. Closed Sundays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A pretty serious jazz shrine where you have to pass within inches of the stage to reach the rest rooms. The **TOMMY FLANAGAN** trio holds forth through May 9. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—In the heart of the heart of this legendary indoor-outdoor eatery is one of Manhattan's newer jazz spots, the Chestnut Room. The **JOHN BUNCH** trio, with **BUCKY PIZZARELLI,** is here through May 9.

Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway. (966-9520)—This second-story loft art gallery has huge expanses of flat white walls that could dwarf a fifty-foot-long mural, and it doubles as a music-and-performance space with an ahead-of-the-curve booking policy. When the shows come in, the art comes down, and the management installs a stage, a cash bar, and second-hand furnishings. On May 6 and May 8, the **JOHN LURIE NATIONAL ORCHESTRA** will

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play. This impressive-sounding outfit is nothing but a trio made up of fake-jazz saxophonist Lurie, drummer Calvin Weston, and percussionist Billy Martin. Three unpredictable performers—**LAURIE ANDERSON, CHRIS NEWMAN,** and **SOLA LIU**—appear on May 7.

TIME CAFE, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Hidden within this sleek and trendy restaurant is a two-story club called Fez. Upstairs is a sumptuous Moroccan bar and lounge appointed with satin couches, mosaic tables, and Arabic-style fixtures. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain in comparison, but still a comfortable spot to take in a show. **RICHARD BARONE** and **JANE SCARPANTONI** perform on May 7. Pal Shazar will open. Dining.

TRAMPS, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Zydeco, soul, blues, and rock are the main orders of business here. May 6 belongs to **WARREN ZEVON** and **CHRIS HARFORD.** Harford is a young singer-guitarist-songwriter who rose through the local club scene in the nineteen-eighties. Last year, he released his début album, "Be Headed"; it includes both loose, distorted rock and lovely acoustic ballads, on one of which Richard Thompson makes a guest appearance. Harford's shows are freewheeling jam sessions that spotlight his large band—the First Rays of the Rising Sun—and the occasional unannounced guest. May 7-8: **KID CREOLE & THE COCONUTS** and **URBAN BLIGHT.** Dining.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—One of New York's most famous basements. **GERI ALLEN'S** quartet holds forth through May 9. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.**

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

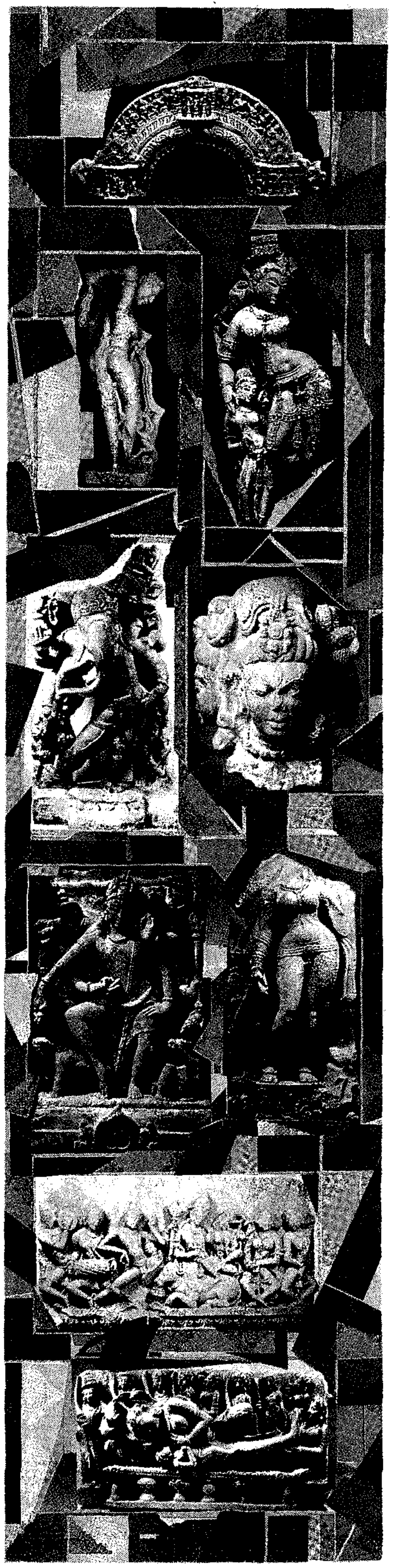
THE nearly naked blonde slunk to the edge of the teardrop stage at Texas Gold (20 West 22nd Street) and pressed her buxomness with all the relish of someone trying to adjust rabbit ears atop an uncoöperative old Zenith. However, more dispiriting than either her rote fondling or her frighteningly unbudgeable mammaries was Gold's opening-night audience's response to them. "Bet if she falls down, she bounces back up," a dyspeptic ringsider sneered, as his buddy watched the dugout closeup on the projection TV over the bar. Hey, guys. Why do you think the booze was free? So most of you could hang out on the upper risers nowhere near the stage? So Lydia could whip her hair while two tie-yankers within money-tossing distance discussed Clinton's health plan and their neighbor yawned wide enough to accommodate Lydia's stiletto heels? Stripping may no longer be a big novelty act, but can you blame the two dozen plus "girls" (with every fourth one "hailing from Orlando, Florida," as if this were what becomes of all those who flunk out of Disney University) for working the propless stage as if it were the graveyard shift at the Empire Diner? But the Ennui Olympics was won by the lovely gamine chosen to perform solo by the sole Lothario with a spark in his eye and a roll of tens in his fist. With her back to him, she bent over, writhed like the Martha Graham dancer she supposedly once was, and never stopped chewing her gum. We may have been deep in the heart of Texas, but baby it was cold inside.

ART

Katz' Eye

IF Andy Warhol's portraits form an iconography of latter-day patrons and secular saints, Alex Katz' suggest the epic scale and rhetorical clarity of neoclassical history paintings. Katz' subjects are invariably calm, flat, and larger than life, and they have a way of meeting the viewer's glance with a level gaze of their own—complicit, assessing, open yet guarded, remote yet alert. In short, they look as if they know they're being observed by a designing eye.

Katz paints the company he keeps, most notably his wife, Ada, whose highly distilled and surprisingly various likeness has become one of our great recurring images in art, as well as a rare hopeful symbol of contemporary domestic union. In "January Morning V," the culminating painting of a 1992 series and the lone work in the current Katz exhibition (Rubinstein-Diacono, 130 Prince Street; through May 12), Ada is depicted in closeup, in front of bare trees in the dead of winter, gazing toward her perennial observer as if toward the spring.



"Gods, Guardians, and Lovers," at Asia Society.

RICHARD CALDICOTT

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"The Greek Miracle: Classical Sculpture from the Dawn of Democracy, the Fifth Century B.C." The Met's tribute to the Periclean age is organized around the idea that in about 550 B.C. the leading artists of Greece began to move beyond the rigidity of Egyptian statuary toward a more rounded and individuated kind of anatomical naturalism. This formal development is the miracle in question, and it is brilliantly illustrated at the very start of the show, as the expressionless face and stiff bearing of the first kouros (statue of a youth), dated 600-580 B.C., gives way to the animated smile and contoured shoulders of the second, from a few decades later. Through May 23. . . . ¶ "Splendid Legacy: The Havemeyer Collection." In 1887, the sugar baron H. O. Havemeyer formed the sort of price-fixing syndicate that antitrust laws were later written to render criminal. The sugar trust posted profits of twenty-five million dollars in its first two and a half years, and it was in large part thanks to this windfall that Havemeyer and his wife, Louisine, were able to form one of this country's truly extraordinary art collections, the lion's share of which they eventually donated to the Metropolitan. During the heyday of the sugar trust, Havemeyer built a mansion and filled his library with important paintings by Rembrandt, Bronzino, Hals, and de Hooch, most of them on view here. Shortly thereafter, the Havemeyers went on a buying rampage through French art, acquiring exquisite works in staggering volume: seven Cézannes, twenty-five Corots, more than forty Courbets, twenty-five Manets, thirty Monets, a hundred and forty Degases (half of them bronzes). The show also includes Rembrandt etchings, El Greco's "View of Toledo," Whistlers, Barye watercolors, a Gilbert Stuart, Tiffany glass, and examples of Japanese, Egyptian, Islamic, and Chinese art. Through June 20. . . . ¶ "Abstract Expressionism: Works on Paper, Selections from the Collection" features more than sixty drawings and paintings by de Kooning, Motherwell, Rothko, and many others. . . . ¶ Paintings from fifteenth-century China, in "Painters of the Great Ming: The Imperial Court and Zhe School." Through May 9. . . . ¶ "Persian Tiles" presents more than fifty tiles from the museum's collection, the majority from the mid-thirteenth century. . . . ¶ "The Art of Pre-Columbian Gold: The Jan Mitchell Collection." (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Thresholds/Santiago Calatrava: Structure and

Expression." Through May 18. . . . ¶ Dadaist photomontages by John Heartfield and photographs by Philip-Lorca diCorcia. . . . ¶ Dry-points by Braque and Picasso, Pop-art that incorporates commercial signs, and computer-assisted photolithographs are among the more than ninety works in "Reading Prints," an installation tracing the role of language in art. . . . ¶ "Projects: Readymade Identities." Ann Hamilton's melancholy "Still Life" is a mountain of folded, scorched men's white shirts, enough of them to last some quietly desperate Bartleby a hundred and sixty weeks. Some of the shirts are streaked with gold leaf. Through May 18. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Picasso and the Age of Iron." A breathtaking installation of some of this century's most engaging sculpture. The show also includes work by Alexander Calder, Alberto Giacometti, Julio González, and David Smith. . . . ¶ "Osmosis" is the first in a series of shows about collaborations between contemporary artists, this one between Ettore Spalletti, an Italian painter and sculptor who makes beautiful cones, bowls, and ellipses and situates them in metaphysical arrangements, and Haim Steinbach, an Israeli-born American who has assumed the role of the shop decorator of Conceptual art, and who arranges a variety of consumer goods on shelves in pointed combinations. The two have worked together while retaining their own identities: Spalletti's objects are on Steinbach's shelves and Steinbach's purchases are in Spalletti's bowls. Somehow, the conjunction of Spalletti's baby-blue sacramental vessels and Steinbach's mirror-finish exercise equipment results in an overkill of fetishism. Through May 17. . . . ¶ One floor below is a concise show of seven sculptures by Richard Serra from the museum's permanent collection, four of them from the recently acquired Panza collection. Among the Panza Serras are two important early works, "Belts" (1966-67), a link to the artist's so-called "process" period, and "Close Pin Prop" (1969), which represents a pivotal moment in the development of his style. Through May 19. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—Seventy-five paintings, watercolors, drawings, and prints by Paul Klee (1879-1940), dating from 1903 to 1939 and all from the museum's permanent collection. Starts May 7. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday through Saturday evenings until 10.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—This Biennial features the work of more than eighty American artists, with much of the material evincing a concern for sociopolitical issues. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway —"Manet to Picasso" is a choice show of thirty-five works on paper, dating from 1871 to 1937 and all drawn from the museum's collection. Through May 23. . . . ¶ Women's age-old passion for stylish shoes is the subject of "Fancy Feet: A Historic Collection of Ladies' Footwear." (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Gods, Guardians, and Lovers: Temple Sculptures from North India, A.D. 700-1200" presents the twenty-armed Ganesa, the elephant-headed god of wisdom and good fortune; Vishnu in his boar incarnation; a monkey untying the girdle of a celestial beauty; and other lasciviously smirking guardians and lovers. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Czech Cubism: Architecture and Design". . . . ¶ "Collecting A to Z." The museum's recent acquisitions, arranged alphabetically. Bauhaus, color, dish with decal—you get the idea. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—"Rain and Snow: The Umbrella in Japanese Art." This exhibition showcases the popular motif of the umbrella, in more than a hundred objects, including paintings, wood-block prints, textiles, and ceramics. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"The Final Frontier" is a group show of painting, photography, sculpture, and electronic media exploring culture and technology. Starts May 7. . . . ¶ Sculpture made from wood, paper, and bamboo by Japanese-American artist Kazumi Tanaka. Starts May 7. . . . ¶ "Carpet Angel," an installation, by Nari Ward, made with carpet remnants, plastic, and other "urban waste material." Starts May 7. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Assault on the Arts: Culture and Politics in Nazi Germany." Through May 28. . . . ¶ "Christian Boltanski: Books, Prints, Printed Matter, Ephemera." Through May 15. (Open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 5:45; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5:45.)

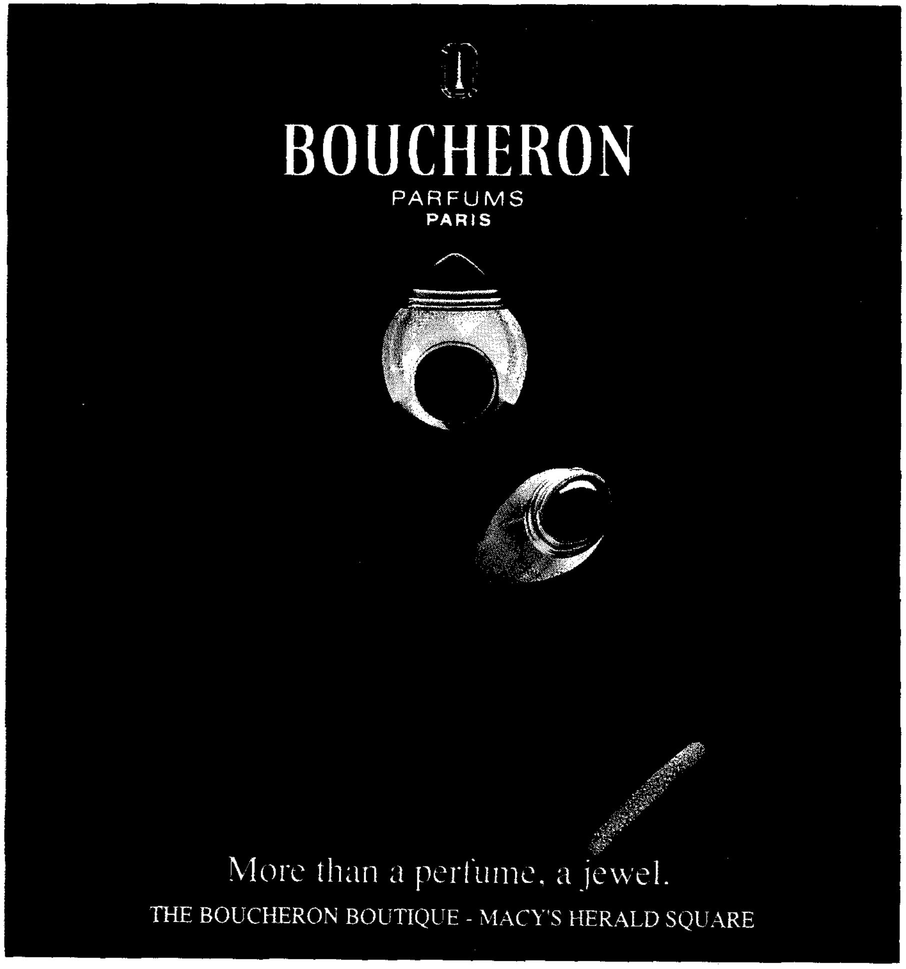
Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—Following in the footsteps of the Whitney, the museum presents "Artists Respond: The 'New World' Question," which contains work by seven artists confronting the perpetuation of myths, historical revisionism, cultural identity, and other topical issues. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

"Two Lives"—Georgia O'Keeffe's and Alfred Stieglitz's shared sensibility is the subject of this show, subtitled "A Conversation in Paintings and Photographs." Their profound affinity is plainly evident in, for example, O'Keeffe's "White Birch" (1925) and Stieglitz's "Dancing Trees" (1922), with their similar forked branches and foliage, and in her "Apple Family A" (1921) and his "Hands Peeling Apples" (1918). It unfolds more subtly, perhaps unconsciously, in Stieglitz's 1920 portrait of O'Keeffe in profile, with her arms and hands raised in a gesture that is mirrored in her painting "Calla Lilies" (1923), and in Stieglitz's "Georgia O'Keeffe: A Portrait—Neck" (1921), in which the cords in her neck resemble the veins of the leaves in her "Pattern of Leaves" (1923). Through June 26. (I.B.M. Gallery of Science and Art, 590 Madison Ave., at 56th St.)

Short List—**MAGDALENA ABAKANOWICZ:** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Through June 5. (Open Mondays). . . . **JACK BEAL:** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. Through May 12. . . . **FRITZ BULTMAN:** Schlesinger, 24 E. 73rd St. Through May 15. . . . **CHARLES BURCHFIELD:** Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St. Through May 15. . . . **MICHAEL BYRON:** Baron-Boisanté, 50 W. 57th St. Through May 8. . . . **MARY FRANK:** Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through May 28. . . . **VALERIE GELBER:** Jadite Annex, 413 W. 50th St. Through May 28. . . . **ALBERTO GIACOMETTI:** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. Through June 19. . . . **CHARLES HOWARD:** Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. Through June 18. . . . **GWEN JOHN:** Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. Through May 28. . . . **JOHN KEANE** and **FRANCES HYNES:** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. Through May 21. . . . **DAVID LIGARE:** Stiebel Modern, 32 E. 57th St. Through June 5. . . . **JOAN MITCHELL:** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through May 8. . . . **JAN MÜLLER** and **BOB THOMPSON:** Vanderwoude Tananbaum, 24 E. 81st St. Through May 29. . . . **BILL PANGBURN:** De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. Through May 29. . . . **BEVERLY PEPPER:** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. Through May 28. . . . **MACHA POYNDER:** LaBoetie, 9 E. 82nd St. Through May 28. . . . **MATTHEW RADFORD:** Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through May 15. . . . **GEORGE SEGAL:** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Through May 15. (Open Mondays). . . . **JOEL SHAPIRO:** Pace, 32 E. 57th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ART–Cont'd

St. Through June 18. . . . **RICHARD SMITH:** Feigen, 49 E. 68th St. Through June 25. . . . **JOHN STOCKDALE** and **PIA SCHUTZMANN:** Urdang, 23 E. 74th St. Through May 22. . . . **PAVEL TCHELITCHEW:** Rosenfeld, 50 W. 57th St. Through May 29. . . . **DAISY YOUNGBLOOD:** McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through May 8.

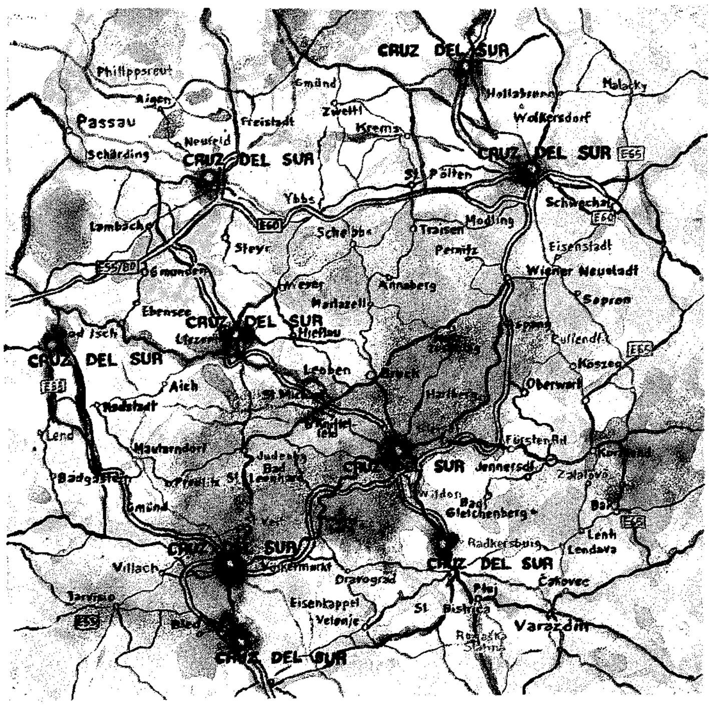
GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

GUILLERMO KUITCA—Of all the painters who derive their imagery from maps, this young Argentine makes perhaps the most private use of them. While his maps are usually of places that he hasn't actually visited, his paintings are nonetheless filled with a sense of transit and transition, of the self in search of a place in history. Most of these new paintings are based on road maps, and there is one based on an astrological chart and one based on a family geneaology. Finally, there are several of Kuitca's most existential and, in a sense, most figurative works, paintings of apartment floor plans. Through June 12. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

"NETHERART"—In the past few decades, no capitalistic nation has seemed to value its artists more than the Dutch, who have paid them simply to be artists. As it turns out, the system hasn't produced much good art, and has now been partially dismantled. This show, which introduces a new generation of Dutch artists, makes it clear that today Holland is a lively, spirited scene. Unfortunately, the art still isn't very good. These artists are very conscious of their formidable art-historical and craft traditions—there are self-portraits after Rembrandt and frequent references to Vermeer and de Hooch—and seem oppressed by them. The best works are the least ambitious ones. The paintings by the former graffitist Hugo Kaagman, done in the blue-and-white style of delftware, are particularly good. In form, he surrenders to history completely, but his imagery (hypodermic needles, buses, planes, and modern buildings) is unmistakably contemporary. Through May 15. (Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl.)

"THE ART OF HITLER"—Between the ages of nineteen and twenty-five, Adolf Hitler fancied himself an artist, and he painted hopelessly conventional watercolors depicting architectural monuments, ruins, and town squares in afternoon light, often copying them from postcards. His art had the stilted look of a supremely untalented hobbyist's, with a peculiar (and telling) lack of interest in the human form. Hitler's artistic career came to an end when the Academy of Visual Arts, in Vienna, rejected him, but the work remains, a minor and oddly chilling postscript to his life. Artist Steven Kasher has spent the past several years collecting Hitler's art and related material in an attempt to understand its relation to the visual culture of the Third Reich and ongoing neo-Nazi *manifestations*. Kasher's installation of more than two hundred paintings, drawings, and photographs is a disturbing supplement to the New York Public Library's "Assault on *the Arts" exhibition. Through May 29. (The* Contemporary, 479 Broome St.)

"URBAN ANALYSIS"—Attempting to sum up the current moment among younger artists in New York, this show employs the same dubious technique as the "I Am the Enunciator" show recently held at the Thread Waxing Space: crowding art works so close together that the effect is a kind of art quilt. Amid the visual din, some of the quieter work stands out, such as John Drury's "Home," a tiny replica of a house, not more than two inches high, topped with a plume of white cotton that billows from the little chimney all the way to the ceiling, and Lucky de Bellevue's cascading yellow-orange pipe-cleaner construction, "Golden Shower." Janine Antoni's work can be found on the lips of the gallery staff, who alternate wearing one of three shades of lipstick, "Janine of New York," "Viewer's Red," and "Post Human." Through May 15. (Braathen, 33 Bleecker St.)



Self-portrait by Guillermo Kuitca.

SHORT LIST—**SIAH ARMAJANI:** Protetch, 560 Broadway. Through June 12. . . . **ILAN AVERBUCH:** Hoffman, 429 West Broadway. Through May 17. . . . **JOHN BEERMAN:** Beitzel, 102 Prince St. Through May 29. . . . **MIRIAM BEERMAN:** Klarfeld Perry, 472 Broome St. Through May 8. . . . **DANIEL BUREN** and **NANCY HOLT:** Weber, 142 Greene St. Through May 22. . . . **HANNE DARBOVEN:** Castelli, 420 West Broadway. Through May 22. . . . **MARK DI SUVERO:** Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. Through June 12. . . . **LAWRENCE FANE:** Bace, 2 Bond St. Through May 29. . . . **MANNY FARBER:** Esman, 575 Broadway. Through May 15. . . . **KATHARINA FRITSCH:** Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. Through June 22. . . . **TSIBI GEVA:** Nosei, 100 Prince St. Through May 15. . . . **FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES:** Rosen, 130 Prince St. Through May 29. . . . **MARY HAMBLETON:** Auchincloss, 558 Broadway. Through May 19. . . . **MARY HEILMANN:** Hearn, 39 Wooster St. Through May 22. . . . **CARLO MARIA MARIANI:** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 420 West Broadway. Through May 28. . . . **JOHN MILLER:** Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. Through May 8. . . . **JOHN MONTI** and **BILL WEISS:** Ledisflam, 584 Broadway. Through May 22. . . . **REE MORTON:** Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. Through June 5. . . . **ODILON REDON:** The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Through May 28. . . . **MIA WESTERLUND ROOSEN:** Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway. Through May 8. . . . **PETER SHELTON:** Louver, 130 Prince St. Through May 29. . . . **TONY SMITH:** Cooper, 155 Wooster St. Through May 29. . . . **GAEL STACK:** Condeso-Lawler, 524 Broadway. Through May 8. . . . **ROBERT VAN VRANKEN:** O. K. Harris, 383 West Broadway. Through May 22. . . . **JAMES WELLING** and **MICHAEL JENKINS:** Gorney, 100 Greene St. Through May 29.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Women on Film

THE current show at Staley Wise (560 Broadway; through May 22) is one of those exhibitions that are worth seeing for memory's sake. Sweepingly titled "20th Century Women," the exhibition itself is far from sweeping. But there are portraits of unforgettable people, and works by unforgettable photographers; and, in an offhand way, the show makes significant points about changes in the lives of women and the way they're represented.

Of course, the reason many of these women have been photographed is that they are glamorous or famous. (Among them are stars like Joan Crawford, Marlene Dietrich, and Jean Harlow, in Hollywood studio photographs.) But the others have their allure, too. The Michael Disfarmer pictures of young women in Arkansas in the nineteen-thirties are spellbinding, in part because they are so immaculately free of glamour. And there are subtle correspondences. A Genevieve Naylor portrait of Eleanor Roosevelt, from about 1945, begs to be compared with a 1992 picture of Hillary Rodham Clinton. Mrs. Clinton is standing with a group of men that includes her husband, whose arm reaches around her in an awkward embrace that emphasizes how carefully the question of Mrs. Clinton's independence is handled. In the earlier picture, the bygone quality of Mrs. Roosevelt's authority is summed up by the almost accidental detail of her large wristwatch. It's a modest and somehow guileless token of her stature.

SHORT LIST—**BOBBY NEEL ADAMS:** Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway. Through May 22. . . . **CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI:** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Through May 15. . . . **JAMES CASEBERE:** Klein, 594 Broadway. Through May 29. . . . **WILLIAM CLAXTON:** Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Through May 22. . . . **WILLIAM CLIFT:** Equitable Gallery, 787 Seventh Ave., at 51st St. Through June 12. . . . **PHILIP-LORCA DI CORCIA:** Wooster Gardens, 40 Wooster St. Through May 15. . . . **ALEXANDRA EDWARDS AND MICHAEL HOWELLS:** Danziger, 415 West Broadway. Through May 29. . . . **NAN GOLDIN AND JOSEF KOUDELKA:** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. Through June 12. . . . **JAY KELLY:** O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway. Through May 22. . . . **RICHARD MISRACH:** Mann, 42 E. 76th St. Through June 5. . . . **DOROTHY NORMAN:** Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St.; through May 15. And International Center of Photography; through June 27. . . . **RICHARD PRINCE:** Gladstone, 99 Greene St. Through June 12. . . . **ELAINE STURTEVANT:** Stux, 163 Mercer St. Through May 29. . . . **JOYCE TENNESON:** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. Through May 15. *(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, and the New York Public Library.)*

MUSIC

Pathfinder

ALFRED BRENDEL has lived in the sonatas of Beethoven: he has been playing them all his adult life, and recording them for most of it, continually exploring and reëxperiencing their astonishing landscapes. And so attending his periodic Beethoven recitals is not so much like rereading a familiar book as it is like revisiting a well-known country in the company of someone who has discovered new sights, new paths. Although his May 5 and May 12 Carnegie Hall recitals are not parts of a complete sonata cycle, they will provide a rich sampling. In both, Mr. Brendel will concentrate on the questing middle-period works, which explode with creative energy in so many directions that Beethoven's contemporaries found them at least as confusing as they were thrilling. Only the first of the five late sonatas is included; it will close the second program. The May 5 recital has the "Moonlight" and "Waldstein" sonatas, and the whole Op. 31 group (including the "Tempest") is to be played on May 12.

(The box-office number for Avery Fisher Hall is 875-5030; for Alice Tully Hall, 875-5050; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

Il Piccolo Teatro dell'Opera—Presenting Britten's "The Rape of Lucretia," with the principal roles alternating between sopranos Lila Ammons and Jane Gilbert and between tenors Carl Halvorson and David Price. Conducted by Anton Coppola, and staged by Mary Duncan. (Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. May 6 at 7:30 and May 7-8 at 8.)

Amato Opera Company—Presenting Verdi's "Otello," in English. (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. May 7-8 at 7:30 and May 9 at 2:30. Through May 16.)

"The Rake's Progress"—Stravinsky's spin on Hogarth, conducted in this concert performance by the composer's amanuensis, Robert Craft. The cast includes soprano Roberta Alexander, mezzo-sopranos Wendy White and Shirley Love, tenor Gregory Hopkins, and bass John Cheek; with the Orchestra of St. Luke's and the Gregg Smith Singers. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 9 at 3.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Colin Davis conducts Mozart's Symphony No. 32, Schubert's Symphony No. 6, and Dvořák's Symphony No. 7. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 6-8 at 8 and May 11 at 7:30.)

Cleveland Orchestra—Vladimir Ashkenazy conducts Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Jean-Yves Thibaudet) and Mahler's Symphony No. 1. (Carnegie Hall. May 6 at 8.)

Manhattan School of Music Philharmonia—Glen Cortese conducts Barber's Violin Concerto (featuring Michael Sutton), Copland's "Four Dance Episodes from 'Rodeo,'" and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 10. (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. May 7 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Gerard Schwarz conducts the première of Leo Smit's "Alabaster Chambers" (for string orchestra), Ginastera's ballet score "Estancia" (featuring baritone Martin Bruns), Mozart's C-Major Piano Concerto (K. 503, with Emanuel Ax), and Haydn's Symphony No. 59. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. May 8 at 8 and May 9 at 3.)

Metropolitan Opera Orchestra—James Levine conducts an all-Berg program: the suites from "Wozzeck" and "Lulu" (both featuring soprano Renée Fleming), the Violin Concerto (with Anne-Sophie Mutter), and the Three Pieces for Orchestra (Op. 6). (Carnegie Hall. May 9 at 3.)

Musica Viva—Walter Klauss directs the choir in a concert of light favorites, with the assistance of Sally Millice and the Ken Mallor jazz trio. (All Souls Unitarian Church, Lexington Ave. at 80th St. 794-3646. May 11 at 8.)

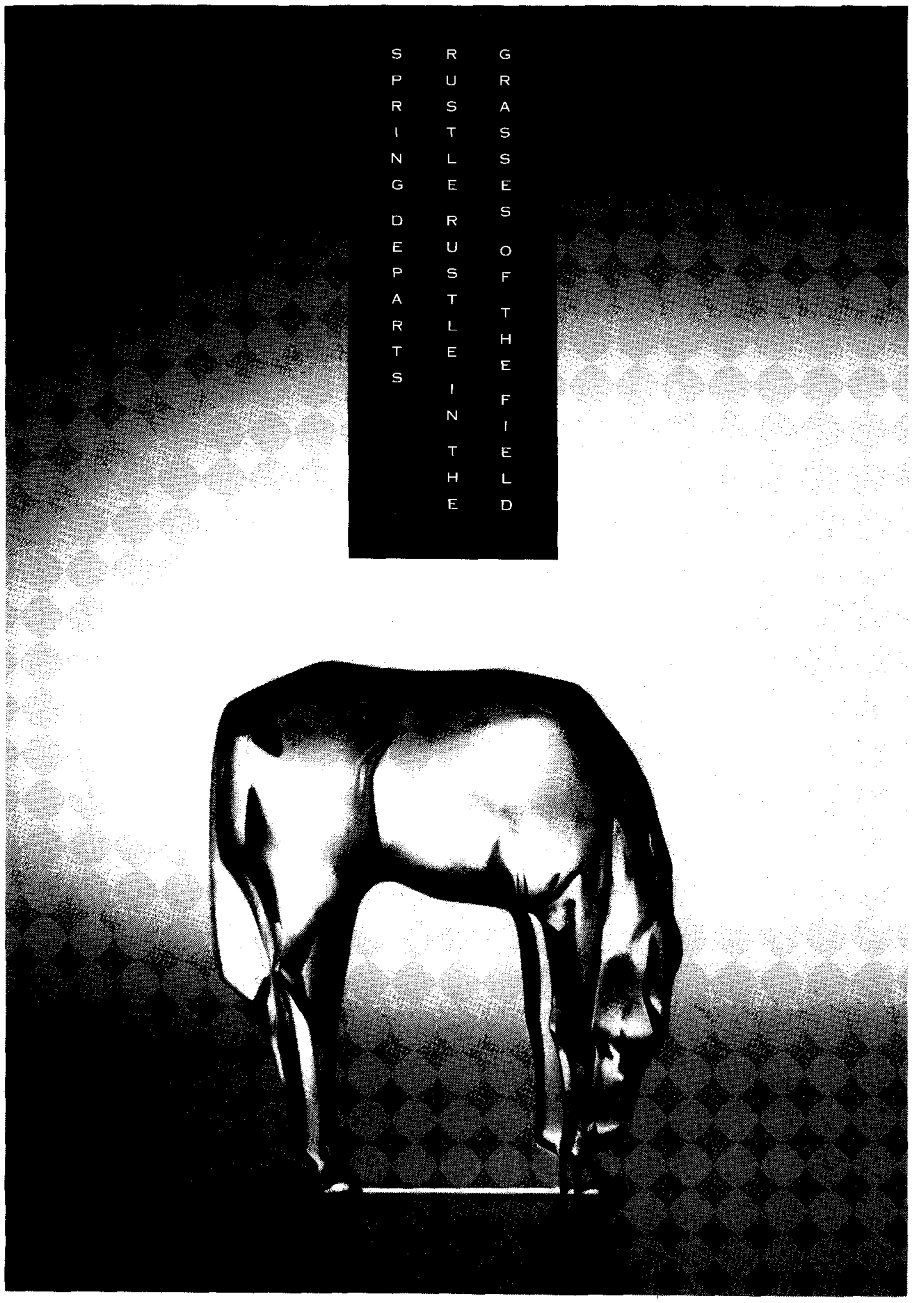
New York Debut Orchestra—Roberto de Barros conducts works by Villa-Lobos and Beethoven (his Symphony No. 2), as well as concerted works by Beethoven (his Second Piano Concerto, featuring Sevgi Topyan), Saint-Saëns (his A-Minor Cello Concerto, with Benjamin Shapira), and Rossini (his "Introduction, Theme and Variations," with clarinettist William Artman Hagenah). (Alice Tully Hall. May 11 at 8.)

RECITALS

Alfred Brendel—In the first of two public recitals illustrating his week-long symposium on Beethoven's piano sonatas, the pianist will perform the Sonatas No. 12 (in A-Flat, Op. 26), No. 13 (in E-Flat, Op. 27, No. 1), No. 14 "quasi una fantasia" (in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2, the "Moonlight"), No. 21 (in C Major, Op. 53, the "Waldstein"), and No. 22 (in F Major, Op. 54). (Carnegie Hall. May 5 at 8.)

Juilliard String Quartet—The foursome is currently digging into the works of Haydn. This installment comprises his Quartets Op. 20, No. 2; Op. 64, No. 2; and Op. 74, No. 1. (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. May 5 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Lauren Wagner—Soprano, performing an all-American recital that will range from a pair of songs by the eighteenth-century composer and patriot Francis Hopkinson to works by six living composers; with pianist Frederick Weldy. (Weill Recital Hall. May 5 at 8.)



Grazing Horse by Umemoto. Haiku by Issa. Height: 4¾". $295. Hoya Crystal Gallery, 450 Park Ave., at 57th St., NY 10022. (800) 462-HOYA for Umemoto Animal Collection brochure or $5 catalogue. Also available at George Watts & Son Milwaukee, Bittner's Louisville, Carl Greve Portland.

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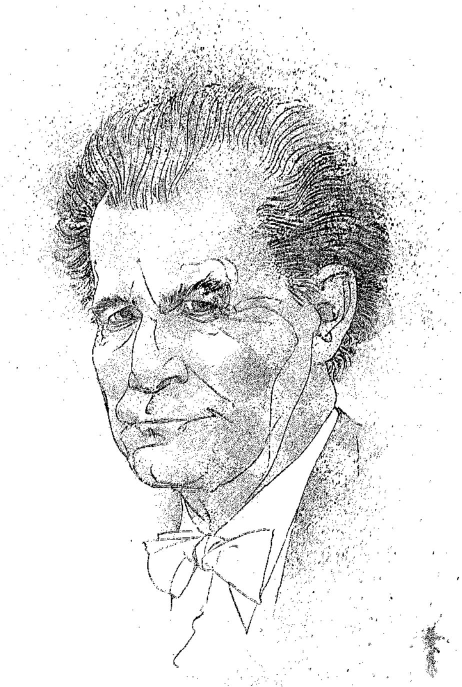


Colin Davis conducts the New York Philharmonic.

Temper, Temper—Western music is based on scales that result from dividing an octave into twelve parts. But if each of those parts—or "intervals"—is absolutely equal, the resulting scales will sound out of tune. Musical theorists, therefore, stretch and squeeze those intervals to yield manageable tuning compromises (or "temperaments"). By the early eighteenth century, temperament had evolved to the point where composers could dream of writing in all twenty-four theoretically possible keys. In 1719, Johann Mattheson achieved a historic breakthrough in Western tonality by writing organ exercises in all twenty-four; and, three years later, the tour of the twenty-four keys became the stuff of masterpieces with the publication of J. S. Bach's "Das Wohltemperirte Clavier." Between 1738 and 1742, Bach assembled a companion volume, which has come to be known as Book II of the "Well-tempered Clavier," combining newly composed preludes and fugues with preëxisting movements. Harpsichordists are giving Book II a workout this month. May 5 at 8: James Richman performs the first half of Book II. (Merkin Concert Hall. The conclusion is scheduled for May 19.) . . . ¶ Bradley Brookshire plays the second half of Book II. (Goldmark Recital Hall, Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. May 9 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Bargemusic—Presenting string quartets by Wolf (his "Italian Serenade"), Dvořák (in C Major, Op. 61), and Beethoven (in C Major, Op. 59, No. 3). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. May 6 at 7:30 and May 9 at 4.)

Maya Beiser—The cellist plays George Crumb's Sonata for Solo Cello, Prokofiev's Cello Sonata, and works by Chinary Ung, Gaspar Cassadó, and Astor Piazzolla; assisted by pianist Christopher Oldfather. (Merkin Concert Hall, May 6 at 8.)

New York Philomusica Chamber Ensemble—Presenting Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat," as staged by Patricia Birch, with a narrative text by Kurt Vonnegut; featured performers include Eli Wallach and Ann Reinking. Also on the bill: Dutilleux's "Dyptique—Les Citations" (a quartet for oboe, harpsichord, double bass, and percussion) and Mozart's Piano Concerto in E-Flat Major (K. 271, featuring Robert Levin). A benefit concert. (Alice Tully Hall. May 6 at 8. For information about tickets, call 580-9933.)

Essential Music—Presenting the United States première of the last piece John Cage wrote ("Thirteen," a meditative composition for thirteen players), as well as a revival of Cage's "Fads and Fancies in the Academy" (thought to be its first performance since it was new, in 1940); also premières of works by Mitchell Clark, Andrew Culver, David First, and Jerome Kitzke. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. May 6 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Four Nations Ensemble—The period-instrument group will perform eighteenth-century vocal and instrumental works that were among the holdings of the library of the Bohemian Counts of Harrach, a collection that now belongs to the New York Public Library (which will display the works' manuscripts on the evening of the concert). Included are works by Giuseppe Amadori, Nicola Porpora, Domenico Sarro, and Leonardo Vinci; though their names resound dimly today, they represent the post-Baroque aesthetic under which Haydn and his contemporaries formed their musical tastes. (Bruno Walter Auditorium, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. May 7 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Tokyo String Trio—Performing Beethoven's D-Major Serenade and Mozart's Divertimento in E-Flat (K. 563). (Weill Recital Hall. May 7 at 8.)

The King's Singers—Close harmony for gentlemen, from the Renaissance to Jacques Brel and beyond. (Alice Tully Hall. May 8 at 8)

Ying Quartet—Three brothers and a sister, from Chicago, in a recital postponed from March 14, performing Haydn's C-Major Quartet (Op. 64, No. 1), Mendelssohn's E-Minor Quartet (Op. 44, No. 2), and the Quartet No. 2 by this year's Pulitzer Prize-winning composer, Christopher Rouse. (New School, 66 W. 11th St. 229-5689. May 9 at 2.)

The Music Project—Offering chamber music featuring oboe (by Charles Martin Loeffler and by Martinu) and bassoon (by François Devienne), as well as Brahms' A-Major Piano Quartet. (Weill Recital Hall. May 9 at 2.)

Mannes Trio—In a concert postponed from March 14, playing Chopin's "Polonaise Brillante" for cello and piano, as well as piano trios by Haydn and Mendelssohn (in D Minor). (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. May 9 at 2:45.)

Emerson String Quartet—Performing quartets by Haydn (the "Lark"), Beethoven (Op. 59, No. 2), Shostakovich (his Seventh), and Bartók (his Third). (Alice Tully Hall. May 9 at 3.)

Gerald Ranck—Harpsichordist, performing sonatas by Scarlatti. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. 874-5210. May 9 at 3.)

Florence Gould Hall Chamber Players—Presenting works by Alexandre Boëly, Copland, Stravinsky, Honegger, Piston, and Ravel, in addition to a première of a piece by Jacques Bondon. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. May 9 at 3.)

Ambrosia Trio—By the time she died ten years ago, at the age of ninety-one, Germaine Tailleferre had largely receded into the footnotes of music history as the only woman member of Les Six, the brash band of musical upstarts in Paris in the twenties. (Her original surname, by the way, was Taillefesse—which falls so indelicately on French ears that Francophones will easily sympathize with her decision to change it.) Each of Les Six ended up developing an individual style; Tailleferre's stressed a cool, concise classicism. The ensemble will play her Piano Trio—a late work, written in 1978—as well as trios by Haydn and Smetana. (St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 346 W. 20th St. 691-6263. May 9 at 4.)

Eric Grossman and Ilan Rechtman—The violinist and the pianist embark on a month of Sundays during which they will play all ten of Beethoven's violin-and-piano sonatas. This opening installment comprises the Sonatas No. 1 (in D Major) and No. 7 (in C Minor). (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. May 9 at 6. No tickets necessary.)

Goliard Chamber Soloists—The group offers a variegated selection of chamber music: Schumann's "Spanisches Liederspiel" (for vocal quartet and piano), Brahms' C-Major Piano Trio, Crumb's Nocturnes (for violin and piano), and Beethoven's Variations on a Theme from Mozart's "Magic Flute" (for cello and piano). (Merkin Concert Hall. May 9 at 7:30.)

Benjamin Breen—In his New York début recital, the Australian violinist performs the United States première of a work by his compatriot Peter Sculthorpe: "from Saibai," in which the composer draws on traditional music from the Torres Strait Islands of the Pacific. Also on the program are sonatas by Brahms (his Third) and Prokofiev (his Second), Chausson's "Poème," and Wieniawski's "Polonaise Brillante"; with pianist Elisaveta Blumina. (Weill Recital Hall. May 9 at 8:30.)

Lunchtime Melodies—Those who toil in midtown may enjoy musical lunch-hours several times a week again this summer in the oasis of Bryant Park. The first program of the season—which will spotlight soprano Abbie Furmansky, baritone Sherrill Milnes, and the Meridian Arts Ensemble—should coincide with the second flush of spring blooms from the park's impressive plantings. (Bryant Park, 42nd St., between Fifth and Sixth Aves. May 10 at 12:30. No tickets necessary.)

Sylvan Winds—Playing Mozart's "Gran Partita" (K. 361), Strauss's Serenade (Op. 7), and D'Indy's "Chansons et Danses." (Weill Recital Hall. May 10 at 8.)

Chamber Players of the League/ISCM—Soprano Christine Schadeberg and pianist Christopher Oldfather perform Schoenberg's "Book of the Hanging Gardens" and "Brettl-Lieder" on a program that also includes Shostakovich's "Rayok," pieces by Stefan Wolpe and Harold Blumenfeld, and the première of a piece by Bruce Saylor. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 11 at 8.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

"The Artistry of Billy Higgins"—Jazz at Lincoln Center's penultimate concert of the season features a drummer who is an omnibus repository of his art's possibilities. Grove's jazz dictionary reels off Higgins' alliances since the fifties: Don Cherry, Dexter Gordon, Ornette Coleman, a rock interlude with Bo Diddley, Thelonious Monk, Milt Jackson, Cedar Walton, and so on. On his own 1979 album, "The Soldier," and elsewhere, Higgins lays down precise time, nice coloring, and a loping, light-footed swing. He'll perform at Lincoln Center with a trio, a quartet, and a quintet. (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. May 6 at 8 and 10. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

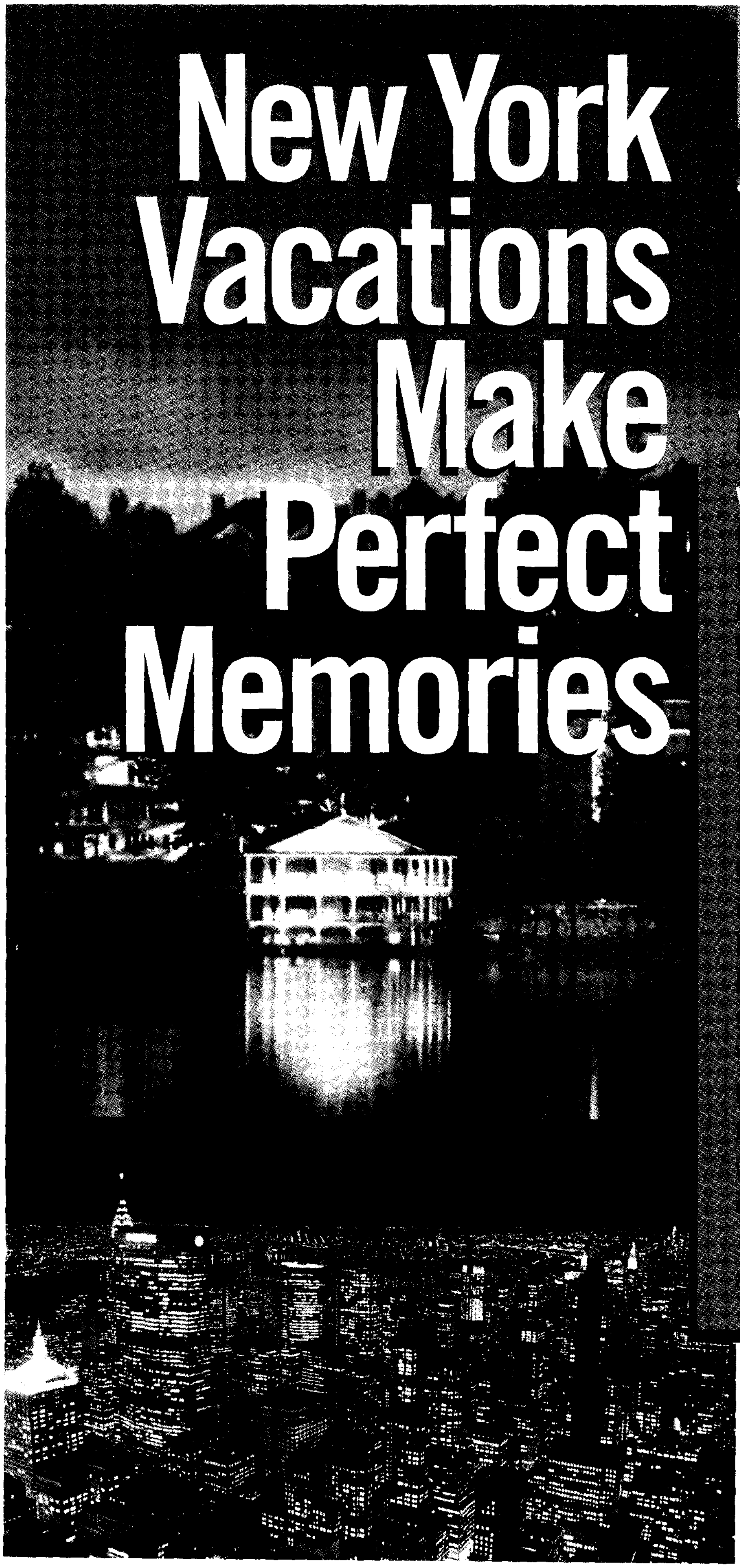
Michael W. Smith—He's a huge star and he's sold millions of records, and you've never heard of him. (But *People* did recently name him one of the "50 Most Beautiful People.") Smith is a Christian rock idol who started as Amy Grant's keyboard player; his solo career took off with his 1991 album, "Go West Young Man" ("When the evil go east, go west young man"). His new album, "Change Your World," sounds like a cross between Billy Joel, Michael Damien, and George Michael, and it bears no trace of nastiness. It addresses, with anthemic intensity, issues like loneliness ("I Will Be Here For You") and people who adopt Christianity because it's fashionable ("Cross of Gold"). With D.C. Talk. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. May 7 at 8.)

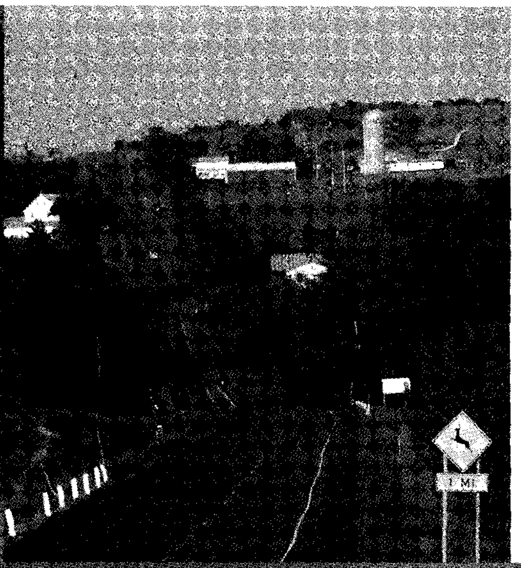
Nana Mouskouri—Europeans revere her as a multilingual, pure-toned balladeer of unparalleled sincerity. Americans may think of her more as the patron pop singer of opticians. Though her ultra-emphatic eyewear has recently crept back into high fashion, her musical style is not likely to follow suit. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 7 at 8.)

"The Musical World of Madagascar"—Sylvestre Randafison, the master of the *valiha* (a tube-zither), and the stirring folk-pop group Tarika Sammy, bring music that evokes the Asian, African, and European influences on Madagascar's indigenous culture. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. May 7 at 8.)

DAVID JOHNSON

New York Vacations Make Perfect Memories





Vacationers young, old, and in between will find some of the most fascinating places in the world to explore here, from towering mountains to city canyons, historic lands to futuristic museums. Journeys along the state's highways and back roads lead to unexpected frontiers—in nature, history, arts, and science.

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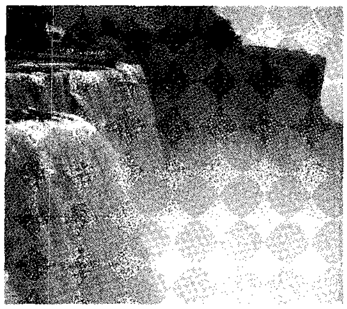


Niagara Frontier

This region is home to one of the seven wonders of the world: after viewing amazing Niagara Falls, travel on to Buffalo, a city noted for its art galleries, museums, theatres, and fine restaurants. History buffs might also head for Old Fort Niagara and nearby military museums, while art lovers may opt for a trip to Artpark, the only state park in the nation devoted to the visual and performing arts. Dollar locations: Buffalo

Chautauqua-Allegheny

Rustic beauty and quaint architecture grace this land nestled in the southwestern corner of the state. Allegany State Park, New York's largest, boasts superb hiking, camping, fishing, and bird-watching. The world-famous Chautauqua Institution offers programs in literature, politics, and the performing arts; the Native American reservations and museums here help to preserve the state's ancient heritage.

Finger Lakes

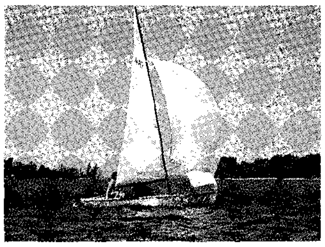
Bodies of water are found in many forms here, from the slender glacial lakes that gave the region its name to the rushing rivers and waterfalls that lend charm to the beautiful countryside and created some of the most spectacular gorges and glens in America. Wander through the wine country on lake-hugging country roads, or stop to sample the cultural offerings in Rochester or Syracuse. Dollar locations: Rochester, Syracuse (2)

Central-Leatherstocking

This land, rich in history and tradition, is the heartland of the state. Reconstructed villages, museums, art treasures, rich farmlands, and geological wonders are just part of the attraction. The quiet communities here are havens for antique-hunters, while sports fans favor Cooperstown's Baseball Hall of Fame, Oneonta's Soccer Hall of Fame, and the International Boxing Hall of Fame, in Canastota. What better way to experience travelling to these great sports attractions than in a sporty convertible from Dollar. Although they're in limited supply, reserve a convertible in advance and enjoy the cool summer breeze in your hair. Dollar locations: Norwich, Utica/Oneida, Yorkville

Thousand Islands-Seaway

Almost two thousand islands dot the St. Lawrence River, drawing thousands of visitors each year to this region noted for its water sports—pleasure boating, sailing, fishing, and white-water rafting. Enjoy island hopping, then set off on shore to follow the Seaway Trail, a federally designated course lined with state parks and historic sites. Dollar locations: Ogdensburg, Watertown



Hudson Valley

Each bend in the Hudson River provides a fresh look into a region steeped in scenic beauty and fascinating history. Here are the majestic views that inspired the nineteenth-century Hudson River School of landscape painting. Stately manors and historic sites dot the countryside. Wineries, antique barns, charming country stores, and beautifully restored inns draw visitors to discover this colorful domain.

The Catskills

Three thousand square miles of mountains and forests, clear streams and waterfalls greet visitors to this region. The Catskills are famous for their glamorous resorts, but outdoor enthusiasts flock here to hike and fish, to try their hand at river tubing and hang gliding, or to enjoy the scenery. One of Dollar's roomy Chrysler minivans is perfect to load up the gang and all your gear to go exploring the Catskills.

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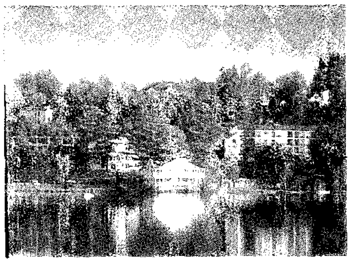
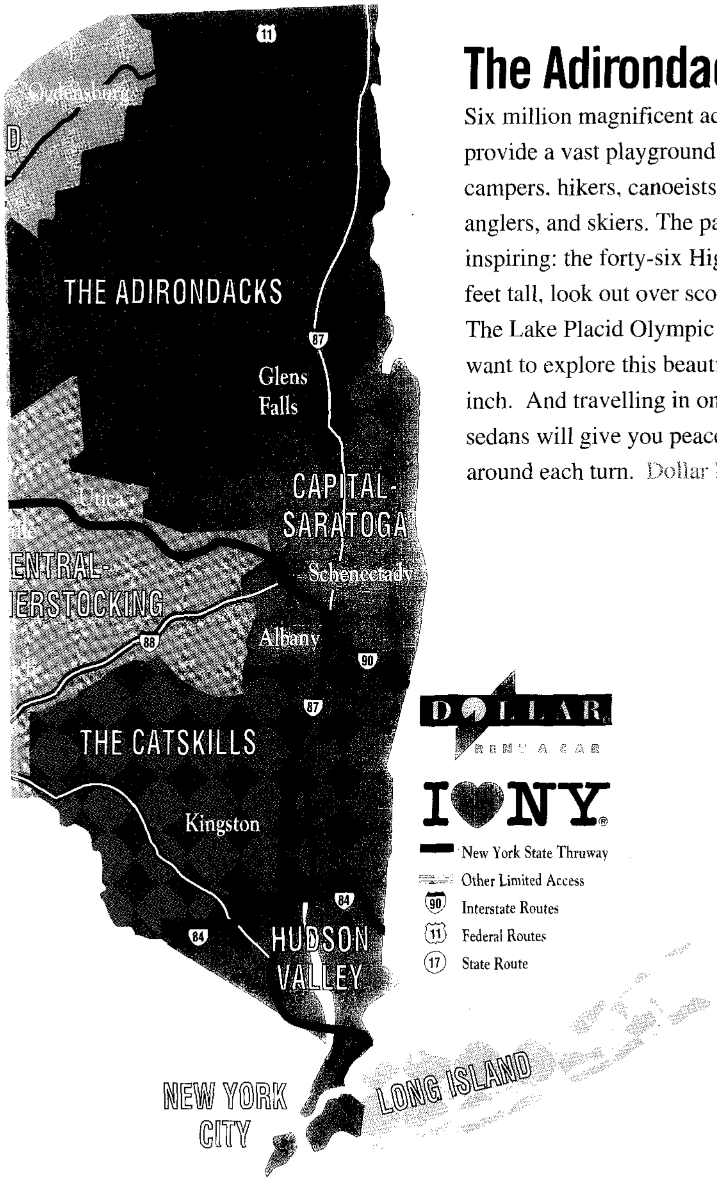


The Adirondacks

Six million magnificent acres provide a vast playground for campers, hikers, canoeists, anglers, and skiers. The park's Olympic proportions are truly awe-inspiring: the forty-six High Peaks, each more than four thousand feet tall, look out over scores of lakes, ponds, rivers, and streams. The Lake Placid Olympic sites are popular attractions, but you'll want to explore this beautiful and historic region inch by breathtaking inch. And travelling in one of Dollar's dependable six-cylinder sedans will give you peace of mind to enjoy the panoramic views around each turn. Dollar locations: Glens Falls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THE ADIRONDACKS
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Glens Falls
Utica
CAPITAL-SARATOGA
Schenectady
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ERSTOCKING
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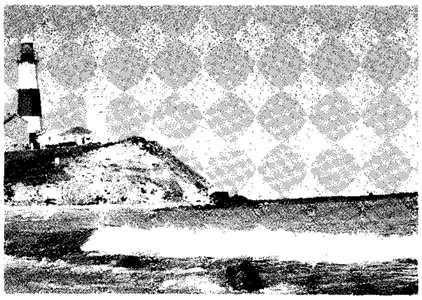
Capital-Saratoga

New York State's capital city, Albany, is a delicious blend of old and new. Restored centuries-old neighborhoods surround the modern, marble Empire State Plaza government center, where the State Capitol and State Museum attract fascinated visitors. A trip to nearby Saratoga reveals a very different sort of city—one of racetracks and mineral springs, battlefields and ballet companies, all set against a charming Victorian background.

Dollar locations: Albany

Long Island

The quiet beauty of miles of golden beaches blends here with a chic, metropolitan sophistication. Long Island's



charms are countless: summer resorts and fishing villages, museums and "Gold Coast" mansions, championship golf courses and historic landmarks lure millions of travellers each year to this hundred-and-twenty-five-mile-long Atlantic isle.

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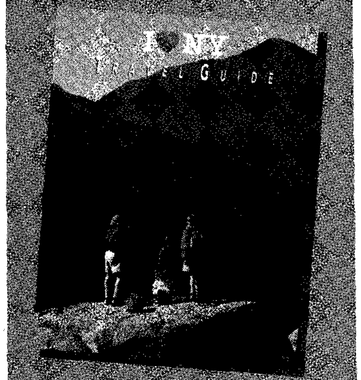
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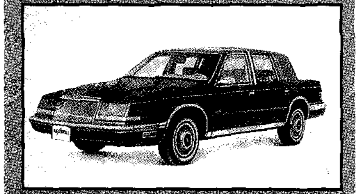

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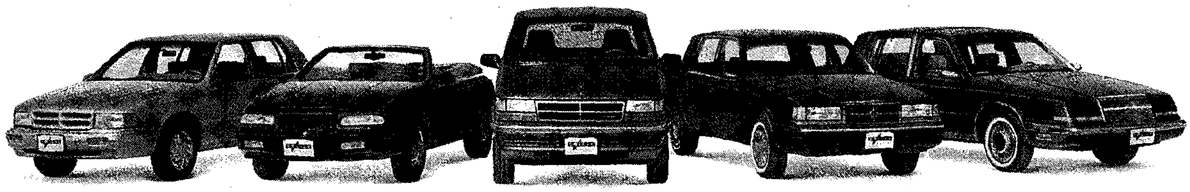

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MUSIC-Cont'd

Bobby Jones—The gospel singer, impresario, and Inaugural entertainer gathers together a slew of singers, including Yolanda Adams and Oscar Hayes & the Abundant Life Choir, for a taping of a TV special. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. May 8 at 3 and 7.)

Tom Jones—Credibility, man. It is never too late. It is *never* too late. It can strike anytime, anywhere. You can even get it on VH-1. We kid you not. Take good care of yourself, because here it comes. (Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. 807-7850. May 11 at midnight.)

Sugar—Bob Mould, formerly the front man for the proto-grunge band Hüsker Dü, explored a brief solo career before putting this extraordinary rock trio together, heading into a studio, and then hitting the road. The results from the studio were the albums "Copper Blue" (1992) and "Beaster" (just released); they were made during the same recording sessions. The band, with Mould on guitar and vocals, David Barbe on bass, and Malcolm Travis on drums, is as well-meshed and propulsive as the engine in a perfectly tuned coupé. Mould's songs roar along, shifting gears and flying through repeated pop crescendos buried under noise. It's a delectable sound. "Beaster" is being promoted as the "dark" version of "Copper Blue," but the earlier album was no walk in the park. It was full of drownings and miseries, and it was great rock. The good news about a Sugar concert is that the band's attack is just as fierce onstage as it is on the records. Fuse and the noisy, chaotic, and anguished band Come will open. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. May 7 at 8.)

Victoria Williams—Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. May 5 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.

Oldies Concert—The Skyliners, the Duprees, the Shangri-Las, Lewis Lymon & the Teenchords, and others. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. May 7 at 8.)

Los Pleneros de la 21—A group that plays Puerto Rican *bomba* and *plena* music. Also on the program is José Aviles, a wood-carver, who will demonstrate his craft. (Brooklyn Public Library, Grand Army Plaza. May 8 at 1:30. No tickets necessary.)

Mother's Day Concert—Jerry Butler, Wil Hart & the Delfonics, and the Intruders. (Apollo Theatre. May 9 at 5 and 9.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Yankees—Vs. the California Angels, May 5 at 7:30 and May 6 at 12:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Milwaukee Brewers, May 11 at 7:30.

Mets—Vs. the Florida Marlins, May 7 at 7:40, May 8-9 at 1:40, and May 10 at 7:40.

CHAMPIONSHIPS—BASKETBALL AND HOCKEY

Knicks—Vs. the Indiana Pacers, May 9 at 7:30. (If necessary.)

Nets—Vs. the Cleveland Cavaliers, May 7 at 7:30. (If necessary.)

Islanders—As of press time, the Islanders, if they prevail against the Washington Capitals, will face the Pittsburgh Penguins on May 6, and again on May 8, at 7:30 (or May 9, if the game is broadcast on ABC). If *that* doesn't settle it, the series will continue on May 10 at 7:30.

(The Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900; the Yankees at Yankee Stadium, 1-718 293-6000; and the Mets at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Golden Stage—City Center's fiftieth-anniversary tribute will include performances by the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Bobby Short, and Irene Worth. Kevin Kline and Joanne Woodward will be the hosts. (131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. May 10 at 7.)

Return To Sender—Aimed at the beginning collector, the 1993 Postage Stamp Show will include dealers' booths and free appraisal services. Mark Stutzman, the artist responsible for the Elvis Presley portrait used for the King's recently issued stamp, will demonstrate the printing of lithographs. (Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, Eleventh Ave. between 34th and 39th Sts. May 5, from noon to 6; May 6, from 10 to 8; May 7-8, from 10 to 6; and May 9, from 10 to 4. No tickets necessary.)

Ars Gratia Columbiae—Several illustrious alumni of Columbia's School of the Arts, including sculptor George Segal and writer Mary Gordon, will be on campus for a daylong symposium on the arts. Playwright Arthur Kopit will give the keynote address and a variety of panels will be offered: "Guilt and the Autobiography" and "Film Production in New York City" are among them. (Lewisohn Hall, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-2876. May 8, from 9:30 to 6.)

Rich Rewards—Adrienne Rich has been picking up well-deserved prizes right and left recently, and she gives occasional readings in New York, but the opportunities to hear this poetic doyenne of feminism give a talk are only getting rarer. Seize this one, where she'll be addressing a favorite topic, poetry and politics. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. May 6 at 7. Tickets at the door on the evening of the talk.)

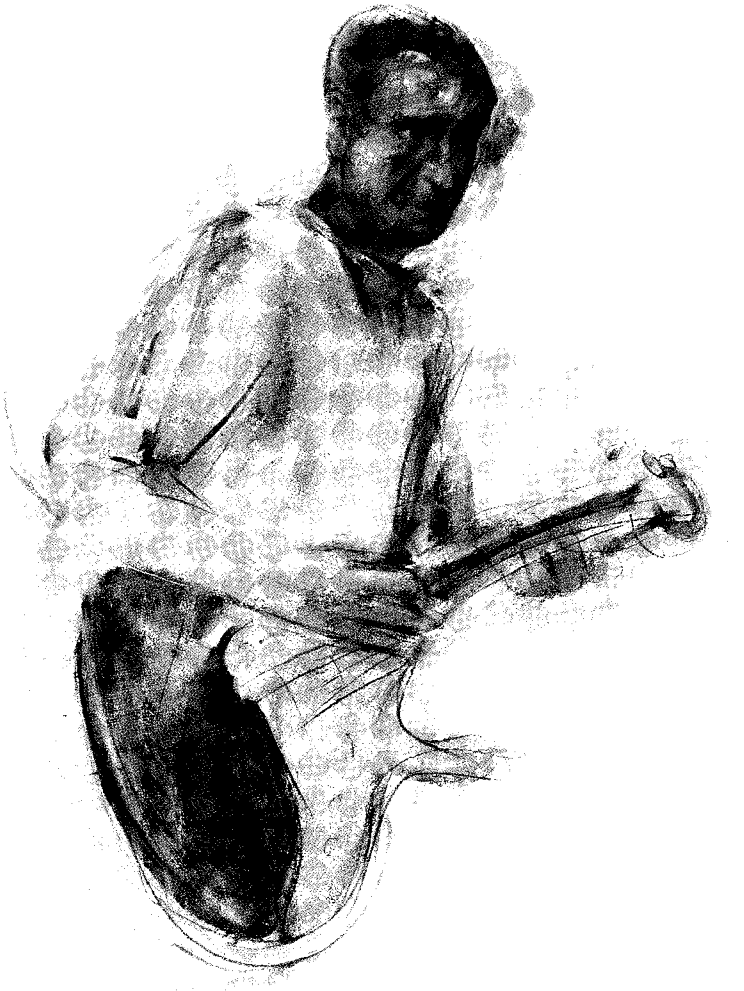
Other People's Words—May 5 at 6:30: Fiction by Gwendolyn Brooks, J. California Cooper, Edward P. Jones, and Sonya Sanchez will be read by actors in another installment of Selected Shorts. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.). . . ¶ May 10 at 8: A reading of Dylan Thomas's "Under Milk Wood," with F. Murray Abraham and directed by Brian Murray, in celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the radio play's world première, which occurred on May 14, 1953, at this venue. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

Readings—May 5 at 7: Poets Yusef Komunyakaa and Sharon Olds will read from their own work. (French Institute/Alliance Française, 22 E. 60th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ May 6 at 8: Michelangelo Signorile will read from "Queer in America: Sex, the Media and the Closets of Power." (A Different Light, 548 Hudson St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ May 9 at 4: Thomas Bolt, Michael Burkard, and Edwin Frank will read from their own poetry. (Alliance Stage, 197 East Broadway, at Jefferson St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ May 10 at 7:30: Barbara Ehrenreich and Kathryn Harrison will read from their own fiction. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 645-5848.). . . ¶ May 11 at 6: Myung Mi Kim, Harryette Mullen, and Leonard Schwartz will read from their own poetry. (Donnell Library Auditorium, 20 W. 53rd St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—May 7 at 7: Daniel Berrigan will talk about accomplishing social change through poetry and commentary. (Goddard Riverside Community Center, 593 Columbus Ave., at 88th St. Tickets at the door on the evening of the talk.). . . ¶ May 11 at 6: Garry Wills will give the second of his talks about "Macbeth." (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.). . . ¶ May 11 at 8: Leon Botstein, president of Bard College, will talk about the crisis in American education. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.)

Tours and Walks—May 5 at 6: Eye on Art Tours will check out artists' studios and current exhibitions in SoHo. For more information, call 877-5117. . . . ¶ May 5 at 6:30: A behind-the-scenes tour of the Czech Cubism show, led by Constantin Boym, the exhibition's designer. (Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St. 860-6321.). . . ¶ May 8 at 11: Big Onion Walking Tours will guide visitors around Ellis Island. There will also be a talk about immigration. For more information, call 439-1090.

Mom-erandum—May 9: It's Mother's Day.



Bob Mould, of Sugar, at Roseland.

KRAWCZYK

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 32.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Map of the Human Heart" (directed by Vincent Ward).
Theatre 2: Through May 6: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan), with Stephen Rea. From May 7: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 3: "Léolo" (Jean-Claude Lauzon, in French).
Theatre 4: "Strictly Ballroom" (†).
Theatre 5: "Okoge" (Takehiro Nakajima, in Japanese).
Theatre 6: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; in Spanish).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through May 6 "Good Evening, Mr. Wallenberg" (1990, Kjell Grede).
From May 7: "The Beekeeper" (1986, Theo Angelopoulos; in Greek), with Marcello Mastroianni.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: Through May 6: "Boiling Point" (†). From May 7: "Dave" (Ivan Reitman), with Kevin Kline and Sigourney Weaver.
Theatre 2: From May 6: "Passion Fish" (John Sayles). From May 7: "Dave."
Theatre 3: "Sidekicks" (Aaron Norris).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "El Mariachi" (†).
Theatre 2: "This Boy's Life" (†).
Theatre 3: "Indecent Proposal" (†).
Theatre 4: "Just Another Girl on the I.R.T" (Leslie Harris).
Theatre 5: Through May 6: "Three of Hearts" (Yurek Bogayevicz). From May 7: The 1993 Human Rights Watch Film Festival.
Theatre 6: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight), with Matthew Broderick.
Theatre 7: Through May 6: "The Pickle" (Paul Mazursky), with Danny Aiello. From May 7: The 1993 Human Rights Watch Film Festival.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through May 6: Four films by Monika Treut.
From May 7: "Amazonia: Voices from the Rainforest" (Glenn Switkes and Monti Aquirre).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).
Theatre 2: "Bodies, Rest & Motion" (Michael Steinberg).
Theatre 3: "Who's the Man?" (Ted Demme).
Theatre 4: "Indian Summer" (†).
Theatre 5: "Howards End" (James Ivory).
Theatre 6: "Claire of the Moon" (Nicole Conn).
Theatre 7: "The Panama Deception" (Barbara Trent), a documentary.

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Sidekicks" (Aaron Norris).
Theatre 2: "Who's the Man?" (Ted Demme), with Doctor Dre and Ed Lover.
Theatre 3: "Point of No Return" (†).
Theatre 4: "Indecent Proposal" (†).
Theatre 5: "Boiling Point" (†).
Theatre 6: "Unforgiven" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through May 6: "Scent of a Woman" (Martin Brest), with Al Pacino.
From May 7: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (Rob Cohen).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Who's the Man?" (Ted Demme).
Theatre 2: "Indian Summer" (†).
Theatre 3: "Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).
Theatre 4: "Benny & Joon" (†).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Indecent Proposal" (†).
Theatre 2: "Boiling Point" (†).
Theatre 3: "Street Knights" (Albert Magnoli).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Splitting Heirs" (Robert Young).

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; in Spanish).

Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan), with Stephen Rea.
Theatre 2: "Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Howards End" (James Ivory).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Enchanted April (Mike Newell); and "Passion Fish" (John Sayles).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through May 6: "Boiling Point" (†). From May 7: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (Rob Cohen), with Jason Scott Lee.
Theatre 2: Through May 6: "The Dark Half" (†). From May 7: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story."

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Unforgiven" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Map of the Human Heart" (Vincent Ward), with Anne Parillaud and Jason Scott Lee.
Theatre 2: "Benny & Joon" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Wide Sargasso Sea" (†).
Theatre 2: "Three of Hearts" (Yurek Bogayevicz), with William Baldwin, Kelly Lynch, and Sherilyn Fenn.
Theatre 3: "Indian Summer" (†).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "Strictly Ballroom" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 6: "Splitting Heirs" (Robert Young). From May 7: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Sandlot" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight), with Matthew Broderick.
Theatre 5: "Watch It" (Thomas Flynn).
Theatre 6: "Scent of a Woman" (Martin Brest).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Point of No Return" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sidekicks" (Aaron Norris).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"The Pickle" (Paul Mazursky), with Danny Aiello.

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Who's the Man?" (Ted Demme).
Theatre 2: "Indecent Proposal" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"The Last Days of Chez Nous" (†).

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"This Boy's Life" (†).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Indecent Proposal" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: Through May 6: "Splitting Heirs" (Robert Young). From May 7: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (Rob Cohen), with Jason Scott Lee.
Theatre 2: "Sandlot" (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight), with Matthew Broderick.
Theatre 2: "Who's the Man?" (Ted Demme).
Theatre 3: "Strictly Ballroom" (†).
Theatre 4: "Indian Summer" (†).
Theatre 5: "Boiling Point" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Dark Half" (†).
Theatre 7: "Sidekicks" (Aaron Norris).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).
Theatre 2: "Benny & Joon" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Execution Protocol" (directed by Stephen Trombley), a documentary.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography" (†).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Splitting Heirs" (Robert Young), with Rick Moranis and Eric Idle.
Theatre 2: "Benny & Joon" (†).

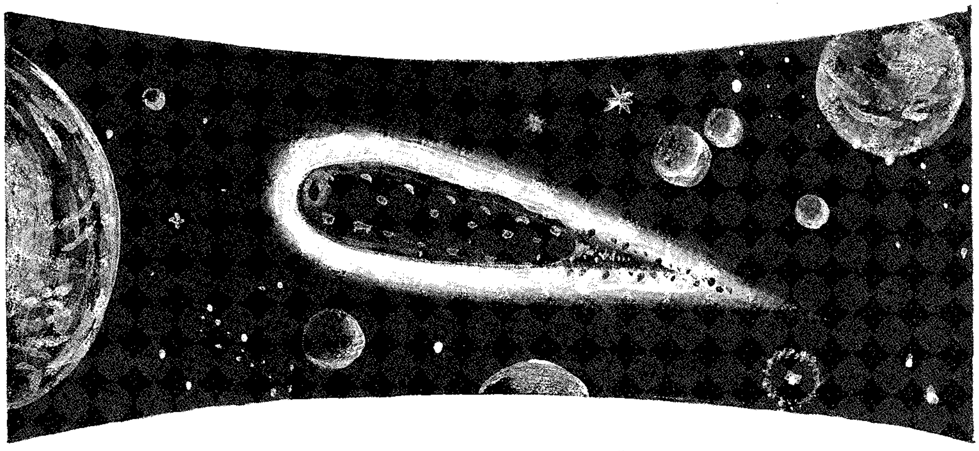
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Through May 6: "The Sandlot" (†) and "Scent of a Woman" (Martin Brest), with Al Pacino. From May 7: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (Rob Cohen), with Jason Scott Lee.
Theatre 2: "The Dark Half" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: Through May 6: "Unforgiven" (†). From May 7: "Man Bites Dog" (Rémy Belvaux, in French), with Belvaux.
Theatre 2: "Indochine" (†).
Theatre 3: From May 6: "Riff-Raff" (Ken Loach). From May 7: "For a Lost Soldier" (Roeland Kerbosch, in Dutch).
Theatre 4: "The Last Days of Chez Nous" (†).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Three of Hearts" (Yurek Bogayevicz), with William Baldwin, Kelly Lynch, and Sherilyn Fenn.
Theatre 2: Through May 6: "Splitting Heirs" (Robert Young). From May 7: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (Rob Cohen), with Jason Scott Lee.
Theatre 3: "Benny & Joon" (†).
Theatre 4: "Benny & Joon" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan).
Theatre 6: "The Dark Half" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight), with Matthew Broderick.
Theatre 8: "Indian Summer" (†).
Theatre 9: Through May 6: "The Dark Half" (†). From May 7: "Dave" (Ivan Reitman).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "The Sandlot" (†).
Theatre 2: "Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).
Theatre 3: "Scent of a Woman" (Martin Brest).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Indian Summer" (†).



Paul Mazursky's "Pickle."

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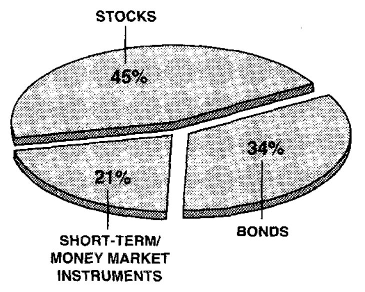

The above chart reflects Asset Manager's approximate investment mix as of December 31, 1992. The fund gradually shifts the percentage of stocks, bonds and short-term/money market instruments as market and economic conditions change.

Average Annual Total Returns*
as of December 31, 1992

12.75%	14.11%
1 Year	Life of fund

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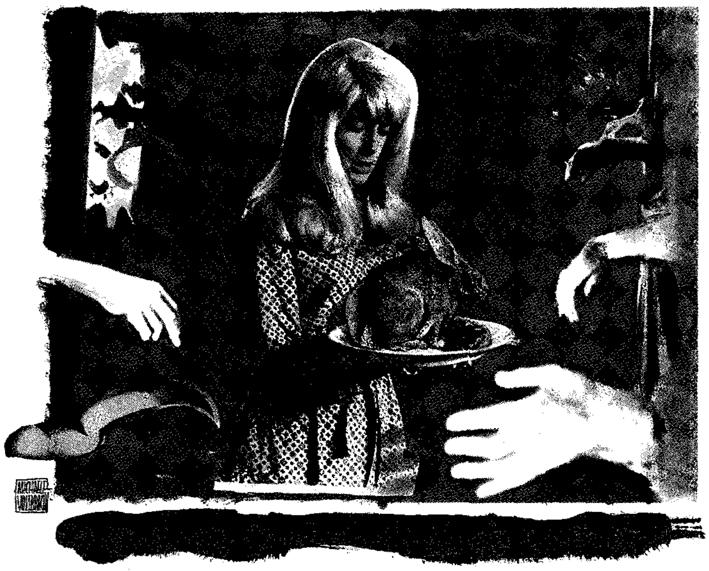


At Theatre 80 St. Marks, Roman Polanski's "Repulsion."

MICHAELE VOLLBRACH

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)

Theatre 1: "The Night We Never Met" (Warren Leight), with Matthew Broderick.

Theatre 2: "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III" (Stuart Gillard); and "Scent of a Woman" (Martin Brest), with Al Pacino.

Theatre 3: "Tous les Matins du Monde" (Alain Corneau, in French).

Theatre 4: "Splitting Heirs" (Robert Young).

Theatre 5: "Sidekicks" (Aaron Norris).

Theatre 6: "The Last Days of Chez Nous" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)

"Benny & Joon" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)

"Unforgiven" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)

"Bodies, Rest & Motion" (Michael Steinberg).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)

Theatre 1: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; in Spanish).

Theatre 2: "Strictly Ballroom" (†).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)

"El Mariachi" (†).

Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)

"The Lover" (Jean-Jacques Annaud).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)

"Howards End" (James Ivory).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)

"Indian Summer" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)

Through May 6: "Splitting Heirs" (Robert Young). From May 7: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (Rob Cohen), with Jason Scott Lee.

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)

Theatre 1: Through May 6: "Léolo" (Jean-Claude Lauzon, in French). From May 7: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).

Theatre 2: "Indochine" (†).

Theatre 3: Through May 6: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan), with Stephen Rea. From May 7: "Much Ado About Nothing" (†).

Theatre 4: "The Story of Qiu Ju" (†).

Theatre 5: "Olivier Olivier" (Agnieszka Holland; in French).

Theatre 6: "Stolen Children" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)

"The Pickle" (Paul Mazursky), with Danny Aiello.

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)

Theatre 1: "This Boy's Life" (†).

Theatre 2: "Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).

Theatre 3: "Indecent Proposal" (†).

Theatre 4: "Boiling Point" (†).

Theatre 5: "Three of Hearts" (Yurek Bogayevicz), with William Baldwin, Kelly Lynch, and Sherilyn Fenn.

Theatre 6: "Dark Half" (†).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)

Theatre 1: "Benny & Joon" (†).

Theatre 2: "Scent of a Woman" (Martin Brest).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)

Theatre 1: "Who's the Man?" (directed by Ted Demme), with Doctor Dre and Ed Lover.

Theatre 2: "The Sandlot" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)

Theatre 1: "Street Knights" (directed by Albert Magnoli).

Theatre 2: "Boiling Point" (†).

Theatre 3: "Who's the Man?" (Ted Demme).

Theatre 4: "Who's the Man?"

Theatre 5: "The Crush" (Alan Shapiro).

Theatre 6: "The Crying Game" (Neil Jordan).

Theatre 7: "Point of No Return" (†).

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)

"Bound by Honor" (Taylor Hackford).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)

Theatre 1: "The Adventures of Huck Finn" (Stephen Sommers).

Theatre 2: "Born Yesterday" (Luis Mandoki).

Theatre 3: "Aladdin," an animated film.

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)

"Indecent Proposal" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)

Theatre 1: "The Dark Half" (†).

Theatre 2: Through May 6: "Cop and a Half" (Henry Winkler). From May 7: "Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story" (Rob Cohen).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)

May 5: "Safety Last" (1923, directed by Fred Newmeyer and Sam Taylor), with Harold Lloyd; and "The Kid Brother" (1927, Ted Wilde and J. A. Howe), with Lloyd.

May 6-10: "Speedy" (1928, Ted Wilde), with Harold Lloyd; and "Why Worry?" (1923, Fred Newmeyer and Sam Taylor), with Lloyd.

From May 11: "Movie Crazy" (1932, Clyde Bruckman), with Harold Lloyd; and three short films with Lloyd.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)

May 5: "Easter Parade" (1948, Charles Walters), with Fred Astaire and Judy Garland; and "Greenwich Village" (1944, Walter Lang), with Carmen Miranda.

May 6-8: "Let's Make Love" (1960, George Cukor), with Marilyn Monroe and Yves Montand; and "There's No Business Like Show Business" (1954, Walter Lang), with Ethel Merman and Dan Dailey.

May 9-10: "West Side Story" (1961, Robert Wise), with Natalie Wood, Richard Beymer, Russ Tamblyn, Rita Moreno, and George Chakiris.

From May 11: "Babes on Broadway" (†); and "Poor Little Rich Girl" (1936, Irving Cummings), with Shirley Temple.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

May 5: "Stalag 17" (1953, Billy Wilder), with William Holden; and "Five Graves to Cairo" (1943, Wilder), with Franchot Tone.

May 6: "Repulsion" (1965, Roman Polanski), with Catherine Deneuve; and "Frantic" (†).

May 7-8: "La Dolce Vita" (1960, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni and Anita Ekberg.

May 9: "The Lady Eve" (1941, Preston Sturges), with Barbara Stanwyck and Henry Fonda; and "Sullivan's Travels" (1941, Sturges), with Veronica Lake and Joel McCrea.

May 10: "Day for Night" (1973, François Truffaut; in French); and "Such a Gorgeous Kid Like Me" (1973, Truffaut; in French).

May 11: "Deliverance" (1972, John Boorman), with Jon Voight, Burt Reynolds, Ned Beatty, and Ronny Cox; and "Excalibur" (1981, Boorman), with Nicol Williamson and Nigel Terry.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—May 6 at 2:30: "Rembetiko" (1983, directed by Costas Ferris; in Greek).... ¶ May 6 at 3 and 6: "Afghanistan: The Trouble Within" (1992, Rafi Ameer) and "Afghanistan: The Aftermath of the Invasion" (1989, Ameer).... ¶ May 6 at 6: "Stella" (1956, Michael Cacoyannis; in Greek), with Melina Mercouri.... ¶ May 7 at 2:30: "The Engagement of Anna" (1972, Pantelis Voulgaris; in Greek).... ¶ May 7 at 3 and 6, May 9 at 2:30, and May 10 at 6: Three different programs of short French films.... ¶ May 7 at 6: "Deserter" (1988, Giorgos Korras; in Greek).... ¶ May 8 at 2: "The Idlers of the Fertile Valley" (1978, Nikos Panayotopoulos; in Greek).... ¶ May 8 at 2:30 and May 11 at 6: "Les Années Déclic 1957-77" (1983, Raymond Depardon; in French).... ¶ May 8 at 5: "Sweet Bunch" (1983, Nikos Nikolaidis; in Greek).... ¶ May 8 at 5 and May 11 at 3: "Far from Vietnam" (1967, in French).... ¶ May 9 at 2: "What Did You Do in the War, Thanassis" (1971, Dinos Katsouridis; in Greek).... ¶ May 9 at 5: "Evdokia—Soldier's Girl" (1971, Alexis Damianos; in Greek).... ¶ May 9 at 5: "Chronique d'un Été" (1961, Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin; in French).... ¶ May 10 at 2:30: "The Ogre of Athens" (1956, Nikos Koundouros; in Greek).... ¶ May 11 at 2:30: "Social Decay" (1932, Stelios Tatassopoulos).... ¶ May 11 at 6: "The Drunkard" (1950, Giorgos Tzavellas; in Greek).

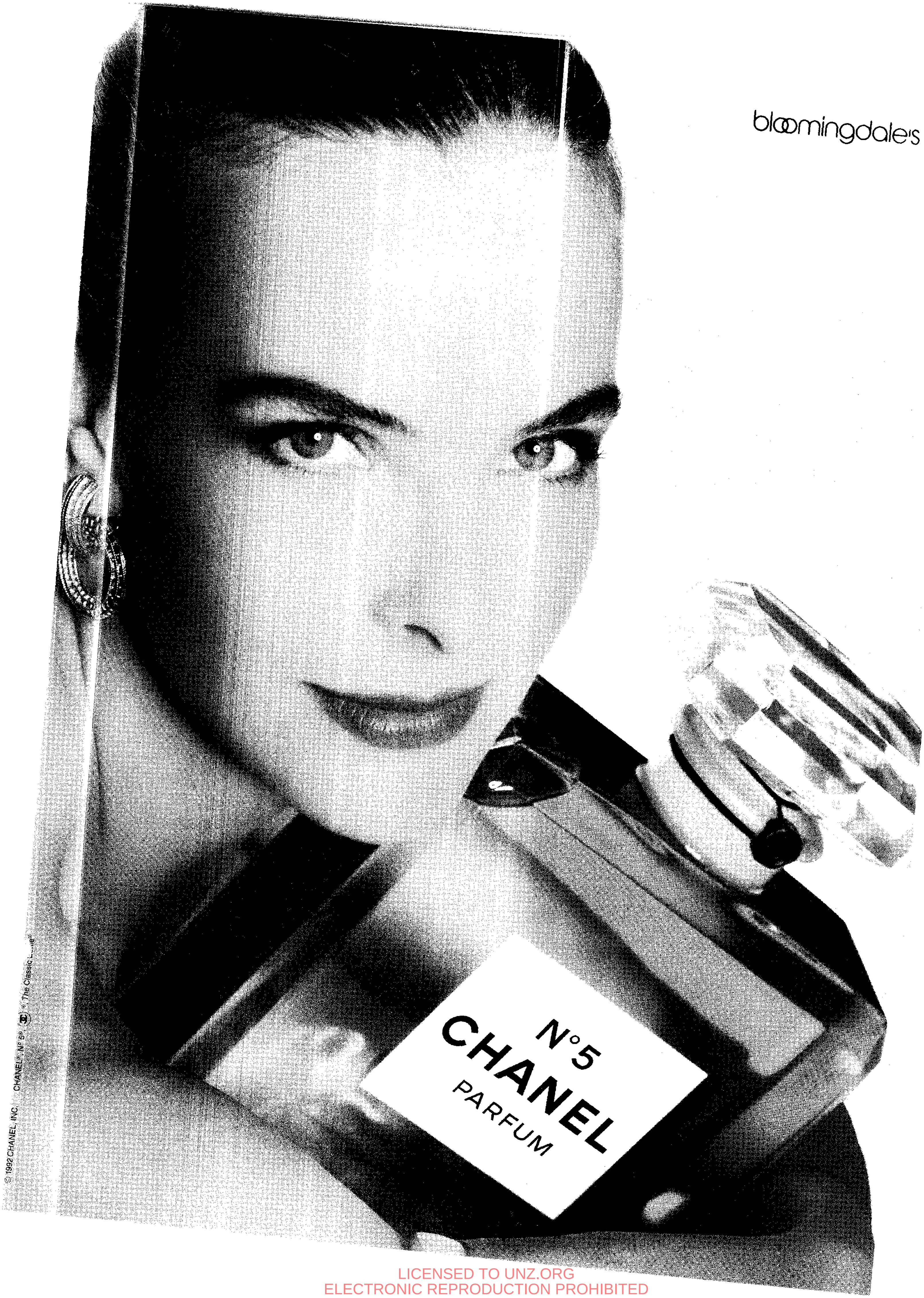
Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—May 5 at 2 and 8: "A Passage to India" (1984, David Lean), with Judy Davis.... ¶ May 5 at 5:45 and May 6 at 2: "My Brilliant Career" (1979, Gillian Armstrong), with Davis.... ¶ May 7 at 2 and 6:15 and May 8 at 4: "Blackmail" (†).... ¶ May 7 at 4:15 and 8:30, May 9 at 4 and 7:30, May 10 at 2 and 10, and May 11 at 4: "Number 17" (1932, Alfred Hitchcock).... ¶ May 7 at 10 and May 8 at 8: "Murder" (1930, Hitchcock), with Herbert Marshall.... ¶ May 8 at 6:15 and 10: "The Skin Game" (1931, Hitchcock).... ¶ May 9 at 5:45 and 9:15, May 10 at 8:15, and May 11 at 2: "Elstree Calling" (1930, Adrian Brunel).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—"What Made Pistachio Nuts? Early Sound Comedy and the Vaudeville Tradition." May 8-9 at 2: "Six of a Kind" (1934, Leo McCarey).... ¶ May 8-9 at 4: "Here Comes Cookie" (1935).

Symphony Space, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—May 11 at 7: "The Front" (1976, Martin Ritt), with Woody Allen.... ¶ May 11 at 8:45: "The Conversation" (1974, Francis Ford Coppola), with Gene Hackman.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—May 5 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Scene of the Crime" (1987, André Téchiné; in French), with Catherine Deneuve.

Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway. (1-718 638-5000)—"Modern Days, Ancient Nights: Thirty Years of African Filmmaking." May 8 at 12:30 and May 9 at 2:30: "This Land Is Ours" (1991, Saddik Balewa).... ¶ May 9 at 2:30 and May 9 at 12:30: "Quartier Mozart" (1992, Jean-Pierre Bekolo).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MOVIES IN BRIEF

SEE PRECEDING PAGES FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS. IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

Featuring Freedom

THE Human Rights Watch Film Festival, running from May 7 to May 20, at the Village Theatre VII, showcases sixty movies and videos that flesh out front-page topics ranging from censorship to the tumult of the post-Cold War era. The schedule includes a five-part tribute to Argentine filmmaker Fernando E. Solanas, the American première of Bertrand Tavernier's documentary about the Algerian War ("La Guerre Sans Nom"), and reports from the former Yugoslavia ("Serbian Epics" and "A Day in the Death of Sarajevo").

The first English-language attraction is Tiana Thi Thanh Nga's autobiographical "From Hollywood to Hanoi" (May 8-9; it will also play at the Film Forum from July 21 to August 3). The festival focusses attention on the movie's value as a social document—its exploration of connections between Vietnamese who fled to the United States and those who were left behind, between Communists and survivors of the Saigon regime, and, of course, between Vietnam and America. Thi Thanh Nga is the daughter of a South Vietnamese official who moved his family from Saigon to Washington, D.C., in 1966. (She began her film career as a martial artist–actress, under the name Tiana, in Sam Peckinpah's 1975 "The Killer Elite.") She mars this account of her search for Vietnamese roots with glib attempts to amuse and jolt, à la Michael Moore in "Roger & Me," and she can be woefully insensitive—she even presents her anti-Communist father with a North Vietnamese Army helmet. But when Thi Thanh Nga interviews Amerasian children abandoned by G.I.s and disowned by Vietnamese, their tragedy pierces through her simplistic recipes for healing, and she succeeds in bringing the war back home.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

BABES ON BROADWAY (1941)—The third of the three Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney M-G-M musicals produced by Arthur Freed and directed by Busby Berkeley. The plot is something forgettable about Judy and Mickey and other youngsters putting on a musical as a benefit for a settlement house for poor children, and there's also a patriotic number about British refugee kids. But Garland and Rooney dancing together are a happy sight. He, Richard Quine, and Ray McDonald are three young hoofers billed as "The Three Balls of Fire," and he gets to do some terrific rowdy dancing, especially in the jive number "Hoe Down." He also has a wild impersonation of Carmen Miranda, the "Bombshell from Brazil," as well as somewhat more subdued takeoffs on George M. Cohan, Walter Hampden's Cyrano de Bergerac, and Harry Lauder. Garland's impressions (of Sarah Bernhardt, Fay Templeton, and Blanche Ring) are less vivid but pleasant enough; her solo songs were directed by Vincente Minnelli, then new to films. With James Gleason, Virginia Weidler, Fay Bainter, and Donald Meek. The script is by Fred Finklehoffe and Elaine Ryan; the songs, from a variety of sources, include Harold Rome's "Franklin D. Roosevelt Jones" and Ralph Freed and Burton Lane's "How About You?"—P.K. (Gramercy; starting May 11.)

At the Walter Reade Theatre, Alfred Hitchcock's "Murder."

PHOTOFEST

BENNY & JOON—This is billed as an offbeat love story, but that's too kind: it misses the beat altogether. Benny Pearl (Aidan Quinn) is an auto mechanic who spends most of his time looking after his sister Joon (Mary Stuart Masterson). She's a bit crazy, although any real madness is kept strictly within the cute limits set by the director, Jeremiah Chechik. There's nothing dangerous or even disquieting about her, just an excess of creative ability and the urge to wear a swimming mask and snorkel in public. But one eccentric isn't enough for this movie. Enter Sam (Johnny Depp), a hopeless case with a taste for clowning and magic who finds a kindred spirit in Joon. "He's sweeter than he is judgmental," she murmurs, which says it all. They fall in love, and stroll past a couple of upsets towards a happy ending. It's one long shower of whimsy, much of it borrowed from elsewhere; when Depp does a little dance with two bread rolls, everyone around him grins with delight, as if they never saw Chaplin doing the same thing. Quinn struggles to give it some dignity, but he can't do anything about Barry Berman's script. "You're blessed," he tells Depp. "You could be the new Buster Keaton." If that kind of heresy doesn't make you weep, nothing will.—A.L. (Murray Hill Cinemas, Coronet, 86th Street East Twin, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Metro Cinema.)

BLACKMAIL (1929)—A London-set Hitchcock silent thriller that was in part reshot and in part dubbed to make it a sound film—and an unusually imaginative and innovative one. With its trick shots in the British Museum and a chase on the museum roof, the film seems almost German in its pictorial style, and the heroine is indeed played by the German actress Anny Ondra, who married Max Schmeling. (Her voice is dubbed.) Cyril Ritchard, who didn't look very different half a century later, plays the artist who tries to rape the heroine. Also with Sara Allgood, John Longden, and Donald Calthrop. Hitchcock turns up being pestered by a little boy while he tries to read a book.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; May 7-8.)

BOILING POINT—An overdressed stiff. The writer-director, James B. Harris, drapes the thin plot of "Money Men," Gerald Petievich's 1981 novel about funny-money scams, with forties nostalgia and film noir existentialism. Petievich's con-man catalyst becomes a Dapper Dan who loves the Big Band era. Harris wastes his energy drawing parallels between this retro villain (Dennis Hopper) and the contemporary hero (Wesley Snipes), a T-man who likewise feels that his world is crumbling. The weird dreaminess and forced analogies slow the movie down. The resulting torpor swallows up the capable Snipes and the colorful Hopper, along with Lolita Davidovich, Seymour Cassel, Valerie Perrine, Jonathan Banks, Tony Lo Bianco, Viggo Mortensen, and Dan Hedaya.—M.S. (19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex, and Manhattan Twin; through May 6.)

THE DARK HALF—Thad Beaumont (Timothy Hutton), the writer hero of George A. Romero's terrific new horror film (based on a Stephen King novel), believes that the creative process involves recognizing the lawless, instinct-driven unconscious, and then surrendering to it. "Let it party. Give it the car keys and let it ride," he says. Thad releases his instincts in the form of nasty, violent thrillers written under the pseudonym George Stark; one day, his literary alter ego comes to life, and that's when the fun (for the audience) begins. King and Romero give the mystery of the creative impulse a thorough airing—take it for a long, recklessly speedy ride, with the top down the whole time. Hutton—an underrated actor—plays Stark, too, and he attacks his juicy dual role greedily. He makes a great grinning psycho; he gives the villain a perverse, Elvis-like charm. Stark's murders are brilliantly staged by Romero, whose work in this picture is his sharpest and most inventive since "Dawn of the Dead" (1979). The picture zooms from exposition to climax with a crazy, headlong momentum that's fuelled by the entertainers' conviction that the low road they're travelling is really the best—the most direct and the most scenic—way to get from here to there. Also with Amy Madigan, Michael Rooker, Julie Harris, and Robert Joy. Screenplay by Romero; cinematography by Tony Pierce-Roberts.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/3/93.) (Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and National Twin. . . . ¶ Manhattan Twin; through May 6.)

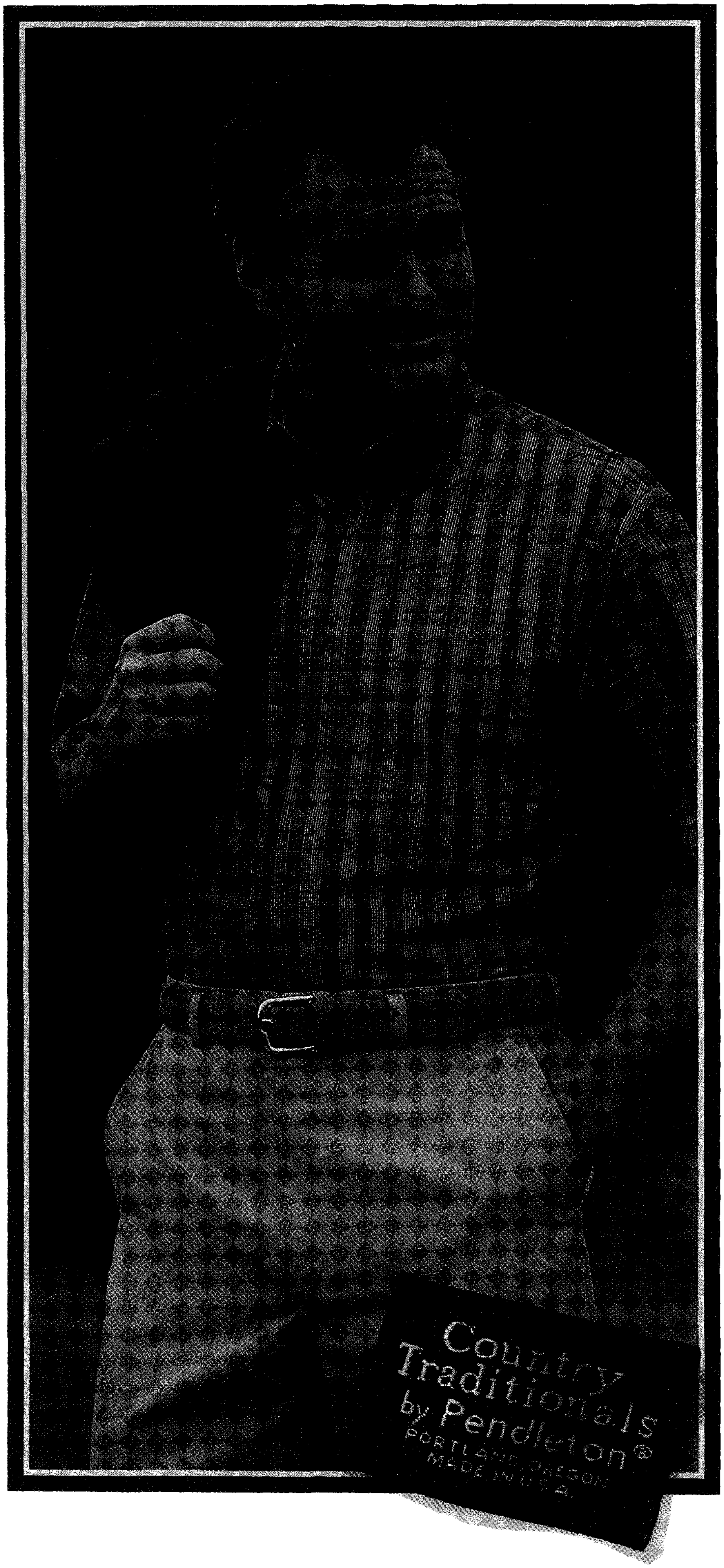
FRANTIC (1988)—It begins promisingly, with Harrison Ford as a San Francisco heart surgeon who comes to Paris with his wife (Betty Buckley); they arrive at their hotel and while he takes a shower she disappears. The director, Roman Polanski, shows his guile and wit, but a thriller needs more than an occasional perverse undertone; it needs some design, some shapeliness. This thing grinds on without ever being able to compensate for its pathetic plot and its unwritten characters. It involves mixed-up suitcases and a couple of night clubs and rooftops, and dope dealers and Arabs and a childlike, amoral tootsie (Emmanuelle Seigner). The script is credited to Polanski and Gerard Brach; the cinematography is by Witold Sobocinski; the music is by Ennio Morricone. With brief appearances by Alexandra Stewart and David Huddlestone.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 6.)

Indecent Proposal—The first and last scenes of this movie vaguely remind you of an old Claude Lelouch weepie—lovers looking wretched in a picturesque fog. Nothing in between is much clearer; this is a humorless, muddle-headed slog through familiar territory. David and Diana Murphy (Woody Harrelson and Demi Moore) are a young married couple, desperate for money, who vainly try their luck at the tables of Las Vegas. Enter John Gage (Robert Redford), who is so smitten by Diana that he offers her a million dollars for one night of love. That's the dilemma, but it never grips you; the director, Adrian Lyne, is bored by anything that smacks of moral complication, preferring to show us what a juicy, unflustered life you can enjoy with that kind of cash. The movie is hardly in a position to chastise Gage for his empty soul when its own style is one of numbing, desolate slickness. None of the performers is given a chance—Harrelson, previously so good in "White Men Can't Jump," looks embarrassed just to be here. And if it's sex you've come to see, don't bother: most of it was already in the trailer.—A.L. (4/26/93) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

Indian Summer—A troupe of thirtysomethings return to the summer camp they loved twenty years ago. With the help of retiring camp director Unca Lou (Alan Arkin), they get back in touch with each other and, you know, their feelings. They overcome their pre-midlife crises by doing the middle-class equivalent of going wild and roughing it—sleeping in bunkhouses and pulling off pranks like short-sheeting a bed. Either you share the nostalgia of the writer-director, Mike Binder, or you fantasize about Jason popping up and finishing everybody off. An amusingly zonked Sam Raimi, the director of "Darkman" and the "Evil Dead" movies, impersonates a lumpish caretaker. At the end, he stares at a moose while Allan Sherman's "Hello Muddah, Hello Faddah" plays on the soundtrack. It renders the rest of the movie superfluous. The campers are played by Diane Lane, Elizabeth Perkins, Julie Warner, Bill Paxton, Vincent Spano, Kevin Pollak, Matt Craven, and Kimberly Williams (as Craven's twenty-one-year-old girlfriend).—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, and Columbus Circle.)

Indochine—The director, Régis Wargnier, uses his star, Catherine Deneuve, largely for her classical, indomitable profile—the same attribute that made her the 1985 model for the French national symbol, "Marianne." Indeed, in this wannabe epic about the waning of French Indochina, Wargnier reduces all his actors and characters to symbols: Deneuve, as a French plantation owner who's lived in Indochina all her life and carries on the spirit of pioneer colonialism; lovely Linh Dan Pham, as Deneuve's adopted daughter, an Annamese princess who becomes a revolutionary leader; and blank Vincent Perez, as a confused French naval officer who wows both mother and child, sparking romance and rebellion. This monument-like picture lacks urgency and staying power—the material oxidizes onscreen. With vistas by cinematographer François Catonné that should increase the tourist traffic in Vietnam and Malaysia. In French.—M.S. (Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Last Days of Chez Nous—In a ramshackle Sydney household, an Australian family gets on with its life, but only just. Beth (Lisa Harrow) starts to lose her French husband, J.P. (Bruno Ganz), to the attentions of her sister Vicki (Kerry Fox); meanwhile, her daughter Annie (Miranda Otto) is falling quietly for Tim (Kiri Paramore), their lodger



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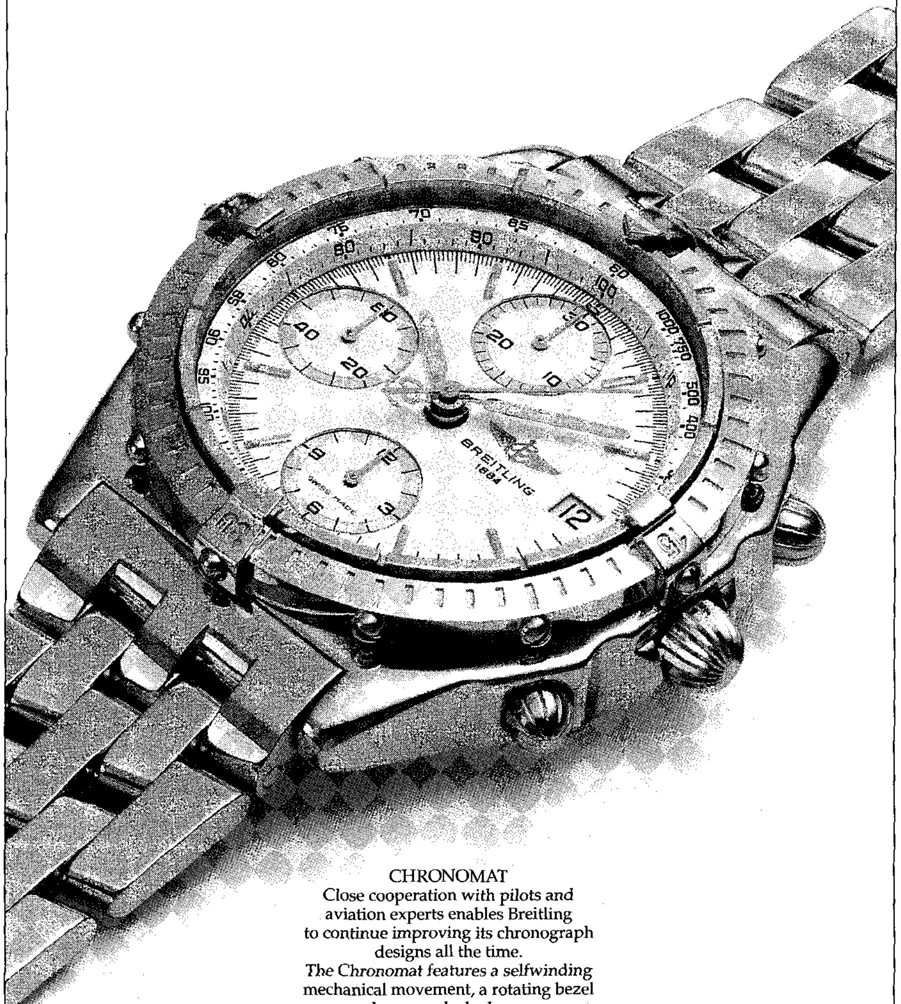

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with the crewcut and the sense of humor. Gillian Armstrong's new movie is a worthy successor to "My Brilliant Career" and "High Tide"; if anything, it feels even more mobile, charting every shift in the emotional climate. It's hard to pin down just what kind of work it is: jokes at the dinner table can turn nasty and upsetting, but people also recover quickly, and sometimes dance without warning. It's a true ensemble movie: none of the performances are vain or showy—Harrow in particular braves all manner of self-exposure, so we can see the fear beneath her strength. This fluent, hopeful comedy (and it is a comedy, for all the encroachments of sadness) is Armstrong's best movie to date.—A.L. (3/1/93) (68th St. Playhouse, Quad Cinema, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

EL MARIACHI—This first film by twenty-four-year-old Robert Rodriguez was made for seven thousand dollars, and part of its enormous charm is that it really looks like a seven-thousand-dollar movie. It's a grubby little thriller, set in a Mexican border town, about a wandering mariachi musician (Carlos Gallardo) who is mistaken for a killer. Rodriguez establishes a delirious pace, and keeps the bullets flying and the corpses crumpling for a brisk, and appropriately terse, eighty-two minutes. The movie has the sort of dry, bracingly unwholesome humor that relentless mayhem can produce if the characters are mean and abject enough and the storytelling is speedy and laconic. This young filmmaker is no visual wizard; he's just an energetic and imaginative manipulator of tried-and-true genre conventions. But if you enter his seedy world with expectations as low as the picture's aspirations, you'll probably have a very good time. Also with Reinol Martinez, Consuelo Gómez, and Peter Marquardt. In Spanish.—T.R. (2/22/93) (Village Theatre VII, and Angelika 57.)

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING—With Kenneth Branagh, Michael Keaton, Robert Sean Leonard, Keanu Reeves, Emma Thompson, and Denzel Washington; directed by Branagh. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; starting May 7.)

POINT OF NO RETURN—John Badham remakes Luc Besson's chic Eurostinker, "La Femme Nikita" (1991), as a big, square, stupid American action movie. It's a slight improvement, but so what? Return to sender. With Bridget Fonda, Gabriel Byrne, Anne Bancroft, Dermot Mulroney, and Harvey Keitel.—T.R. (19th Street East 6, Gemini, and Criterion Center.)

THE SANDLOT—With nine prepubescent kids doing shtick, one drooling mammoth dog, a voice-over soaked in early-sixties nostalgia, and the message that baseball brings fathers and sons together, this movie is an unholy pastiche of "The Bad News Bears," "Beethoven," "The Wonder Years," and "Field of Dreams." The director, David Mickey Evans, takes his time-worn premise—a new boy in town finds himself when he joins a sandlot baseball team—and tries to make it mythic through hyperbole. There's a snappy change-of-pace gag involving a little guy and a nubile lifeguard, but the screams and barks and fraudulent emotions grow wearying. Featuring Tom Guiry as the newcomer, Karen Allen and Denis Leary as his mom and stepdad, Mike Vitar as the leader of the pack, and James Earl Jones as the mystery man who owns the giant canine.—M.S. (First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Olympia. . . . ¶ Art Greenwich Twin; through May 6.)

STOLEN CHILDREN ("Il Ladro di Bambini")—Neo-neorealism about a decent young officer in the Carabinieri (Enrico Lo Verso) and his attempt to connect with two troubled kids: an eleven-year-old girl (Valentina Scalici) whose mother turned her into a prostitute, and her sickly younger brother (Giuseppe Ieracitano). The director, Gianni Amelio (who co-wrote the script with Sandro Petraglia and Stefano Rulli), is honorable and sensitive; the movie has some tense, emotionally saturated moments, but the odyssey is a bit drawn-out and flat. The film lacks the heightened lucidity of its major models—the movies of Vittorio De Sica. Basically, you see three withdrawn people warming to each other between naps. In Italian.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Story of Qiu Ju—This new film by the Chinese director Zhang Yimou is a far cry from his earlier work. After such intense, forbidding fables as "Red Sorghum" and "Raise the Red Lantern" we are now offered a rough-edged comedy about a man kicked in the groin by the village elder. The victim's wife Qiu Ju (played by Zhang's habitual leading lady, the marvellous Gong Li) is determined to see justice done; all she wants is an apology, but the quest for it takes her away from village life and into the chaos of the city. She and her sister-in-law wander around (through the first modern crowds we have seen in a Zhang film) and get snared in bureaucratic red tape. The rhythm of the movie is a kind of gentle shuffle, and its beauty the result more of accident, you feel, than design; corncobs and chilies hanging from the roof of a hut are all that remain of the violent reds and yellows that glared throughout Zhang's second feature, "Ju Dou." It was brave to turn away from that driven style, but not altogether wise; who would have thought that a Zhang Yimou film could ever turn out to be something of a drag? In Mandarin.—A.L. (4/26/93) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Strictly Ballroom—Baz Luhrmann's first film brings good news: Australian cinema is on the move again, with a vigor not seen since the days of "Mad Max." There's no violence in "Strictly Ballroom"—the general lack of unpleasantness, in fact, is quite unnerving—but the speed of it still leaves you reeling. A young dancer, played by Paul Mercurio, acquires a new partner (Tara Morice), dreams up a flash routine, and sets out to break the Old Guard. The plot is cut-rate melodrama, and Luhrmann knows it; but he never sneers at his hero's ambitions. Besides, there are so many other things to laugh at—the costumes, the minor characters with their major obsessions, the psychedelic makeup, the trashy music. The movie is over before you know it, and is not one to linger in the mind, or indeed pass through the mind at all; but it's a good-humored ride for the senses, never too sickly, and who can say no to that?—A.L. (2/15/93) (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

This Boy's Life—Michael Caton-Jones' absorbing film is based on Tobias Wolff's 1989 memoir of growing up in the fifties. The screenplay, by Robert Getchell (who also wrote "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore"), initially presents teen-age Toby (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his mother, Caroline (Ellen Barkin), as a pair of cheerful road-movie nomads, wandering from town to town and picking their destinations almost randomly. Their troubles start when Caroline, thinking that Toby needs a father, marries a small-town clod named Dwight (Robert De Niro), who proves to be a bully—the sort of guy who fancies himself king of the castle and takes pleasure in making his subjects bend to his will. Dwight is one-dimensional; we learn everything we need to know about him early on. Fortunately, the movie doesn't stay cooped up in his gloomy castle. And Barkin and DiCaprio are sensational. Every time De Niro threatens to take over the picture, they snatch our attention right back, and always with something casual: a look or a gesture that conveys how thoroughly this mother and son understand each other. Also with Jonah Blechman. Wonderful cinematography by David Watkin.—T.R. (4/19/93) (Village Theatre VII, Tower East, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Unforgiven—Set in eighteen-eighties Kansas and Wyoming, this engrossing, moody Western is the sixteenth film Clint Eastwood has directed, and by far the best. The canny script, by David Webb Peoples, revives the old story about the retired gunfighter (Eastwood) who picks up his firearms again for one last score. These filmmakers offer no easy resolutions. The action begins when a cowboy slashes the face of a prostitute, and her co-workers pool their money to offer a reward for the murder of him and his partner. Jaimz Woolvett is the upstart who enlists Eastwood in the bounty hunt. Morgan Freeman plays Eastwood's long-time partner, Gene Hackman a megalomaniac sheriff, Richard Harris a flamboyant English gunslinger, and Saul Rubinek a dime novelist. This is the finest set of performances ever to grace a Clint Eastwood movie, and Eastwood even does a good job directing Eastwood. Academy Awards for Best Picture, Director, Supporting Actor (Hackman), and Editing (Joel Cox).—M.S. (8/10/92) (19th Street East 6, 59th Street East Cinema, and Festival. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; through May 6.)

Visions of Light: The Art of Cinematography—This documentary, directed by Arnold Glassman, Todd McCarthy, and Stuart Samuels, is much more fun than its college-catalogue title suggests. The movie is cheery, convivial, and swift: for ninety minutes, stunning images, drawn from all eras of movie history, pass before us, and we listen to a couple of dozen veteran cinematographers speaking about what they do. The craftsmen are a likable and unpretentious bunch, and it's easy to share their delight in the achievements of their colleagues and masters: the film is a joy to look at. (The clips are taken from the best possible prints, and they're all shown in their original aspect ratios.) Movie-lovers can argue with some of the filmmakers' choices—the near total exclusion of images from Westerns is the most serious flaw—but, in a strange way, that's part of the picture's charm. It has the power to revive senses that have been dulled by the crushing predictability of recent movies. The cinematographers interviewed include Allen Daviau, Caleb Deschanel, Haskell Wexler, John Bailey, and the late Nestor Almendros (to whom the film is dedicated).—T.R. (4/5/93) (Film Forum.)

Wide Sargasso Sea—John Duigan's adaptation of Jean Rhys's strange and memorable 1966 novel is set in the West Indies of the mid-nineteenth century, and an air of thick tropical sensuality pervades the movie's imagery. The hero, a young Englishman named Edward Rochester (Nathaniel Parker), arrives in Jamaica sick with fever after his long ocean passage; his stay on the island, during which he marries a ravishing Creole heiress named Antoinette Cosway (Karina Lombard), is a blur of heightened perception and disordered reason. As the marriage goes bad, events take on a nightmarish inevitability, as if they were moving toward a preordained end. They are: the hero of this picture is the younger self of the Rochester that Charlotte Brontë created in "Jane Eyre," the brooding landowner who kept his mad wife locked up in his English estate house; and Antoinette is the young woman who became his prisoner and his shameful secret. Duigan and his cinematographer, Geoff Burton, merge the luxuriant erotic tension of a tropical idyll with the clammy apprehension of gothic fiction. And the film is so serenely paced and so envelopingly lovely to watch that you may not realize until the end that it is, in the deepest sense, a horror movie—an intimate portrayal of the relationship between a monster and his victim. Also with Claudia Robinson, Rowena King, Rachel Ward, and Michael York. Stewart Copeland's score is superb.—T.R. (4/19/93) (Cinema I.)

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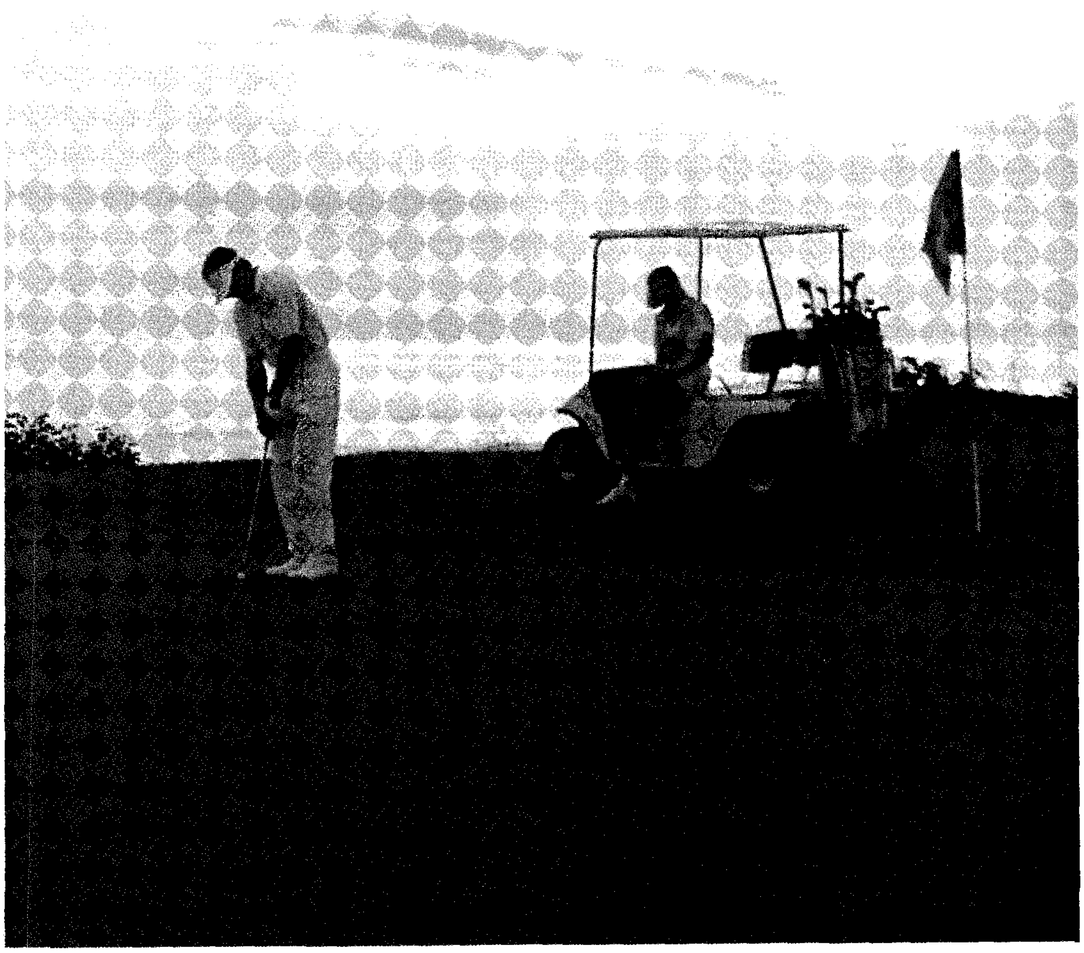

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THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

HUDDLED MASSES

It was an eccentric affair, "Ellis: 1907." The people at the Lower East Side Tenement Museum, down on Orchard Street, cooked it up. Their idea was to re-create "the immigrant experience" for some of the museum's well-heeled patrons. So that's how two hundred or so handsomely dressed ladies and gentlemen came together the other evening on the decks of Miss Liberty, which usually ferries tourists out to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. The evening's weather was raw, windy, and not very inviting. "There's a gentleman walking around with sardines," a banker in a flapping gray trenchcoat said. It was true. Baskets of bread were also being offered through the crowd, and springwater in small plastic bottles.

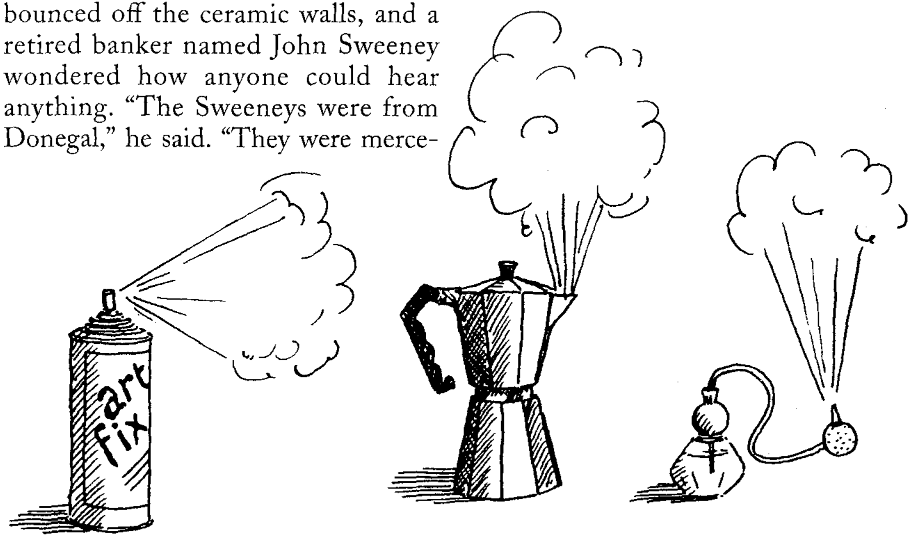
The guests wore salmon-colored landing cards around their necks, and they ate the simple snacks, because that's what the people who came through Ellis Island were fed in 1907. Sardines were nutritious, and the bread was for wiping the sardine oil from their fingers, a museum official explained. A kinetic troupe of actors, hired for the occasion, wandered the ship in Old World costume, enacting scenes of arrival and joy. They had names like Francesco and Frances, and when you tried to talk to them they stayed resolutely in character. Frances said she was from County Mayo, and when the Statue of Liberty came into view she clutched at her skirts and wept.

From the water, the old processing center looked stolid and grand, like an Edwardian train station. The ferry ride took ten minutes, and once the passengers were on shore tuxedoed clerks checked their coats. More than a million people came through Ellis Island in 1907, the peak year in terms of volume. All immigrants received medical and legal inspections, and now the patrons got a dramatized sample of this kind of treatment. Heavy hitters from Chase Manhattan Bank stood soberly in line to have their postures checked; they were herded through corridors of cracked white tile, and were asked by more actors if they were anarchists, if they were polygamists, and if they were insane.

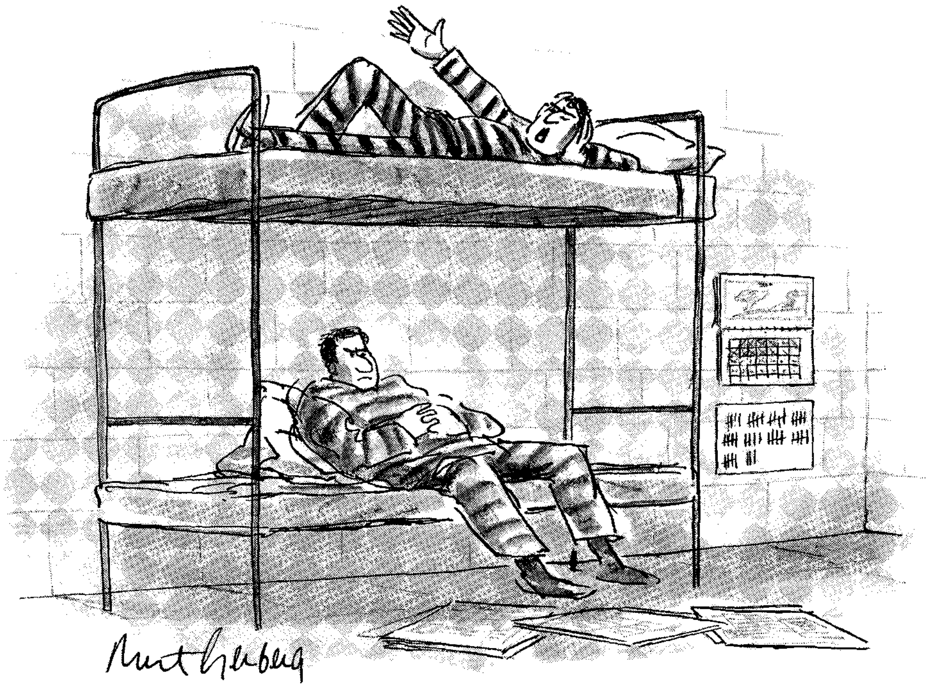
Tickets to the event topped out at a thousand dollars, but no one was complaining. The crowd was divided into three groups, and was shepherded from one immigration station to the next. This took more than an hour, during which the patrons shuffled around in their prosperous-looking suits and grinned. The evening's schedule was printed in an elegant booklet (also salmon), along with quotations from original immigrants and a rundown of the old Ellis Island routine. Noise bounced off the ceramic walls, and a retired banker named John Sweeney wondered how anyone could hear anything. "The Sweeneys were from Donegal," he said. "They were mercenaries, mostly. A lot of them were crazy Irish."

An American dinner was served in the Registry Room, on wooden tables covered with white linen and named for streets on the Lower East Side. At one table called Ludlow Street, the faux immigrants sat quietly and peered at their food. There were bowls of fruit, chopped herring, and soda crackers, with chilled table wines from France. "I don't know what the etiquette is here," said Richard Kandel, the proprietor of an accounting firm on Long Island. He wore a smoke-gray pin-striped suit and a Rolex gold watch, and he began ladling out portions of brown stew with a long silver spoon. "Who were your first ancestors in America?" someone asked a stately-looking woman from the Philippines. "I am it," she replied.

People told stories of travel and dislocation, and while they did so you could look through one of the building's huge crescent windows at lower Manhattan, its lights bright against a cloudy sky. A



BENOÎT VAN INNIS



"Give him a chance, I say. I mean what the hell is a hundred days?"

• •

social worker named Estelle Haferling said that her family always told about their journey out of Poland in 1918, and how they did their washing in steam from the locomotives. Waiters in tuxedos began distributing coffee (decaf optional), and apple pie smothered in strawberries. Some of the actors tried to get Mr. Kandel to dance the hora, but he told them in a polite way to bug off. He said his father came from Poland, too, in 1918, but he couldn't remember where. He called later and said it was Lublin.

FORTUNE-TELLER

When Archibald Roosevelt, President Theodore's ten-year-old son, entered Thomas Sidwell's Friends Select School, in 1904, the school revelled in the publicity he attracted. The principal, Mr. Sidwell, saw in Archie's arrival a chance to boost student enrollment, and he talked eagerly to the press about the boy's activities. Archie, a lively lad, invited his friends home to play football on the White House lawn, and once even had his pony brought up to his bedroom in the White House elevator. The press had a wonderful time reporting such things.

Things are different now. The Sidwell Friends School, as Thomas Sidwell's institution is now called, has for many years been heavily oversubscribed, and so has no incentive to use Chelsea Clinton's presence as a way of attracting new students. Another difference is that the school is committed to doing everything possible to protect her privacy. Unlike Mr. Sidwell, Robert Williams, the middle school's principal, is the soul of discretion; before Chelsea arrived, on January 25th, to enter the eighth grade, the staff and the students were asked not to talk about her. This and other restrictions caused by Chelsea's enrollment caused some resentment among the students at first.

"We thought the world was ending because our freedom was being taken away," a middle-school student explained, disregarding the request for silence. "All the classroom doors had to be locked from the inside to shut strangers out, then opened and locked again if someone came late. We had to knock and give our names. We were mad about that, and as a joke we made up passwords like 'Swordfish,' or used expressions like 'Have the lambs stopped crying?'—from the movie 'The Silence of the Lambs.' We had sensitivity training in small groups. 'Pretend you're Chelsea,' the teacher said. 'Would you want to try out for the school play? Would you want to be friends with someone like you?'

"That's all over now. The locked-door rule was lifted, and day-to-day life hasn't changed at all. Once she got on campus, we realized she was just a kid like the rest of us. The Secret Service watches her outside, not in class. She's friendly, nice to everybody, she can be funny, and she's very bright for her age. I heard that for her thirteenth birthday, on February 27th, Daddy Bill let her have a sleepover at the White House for her girlfriends from Little Rock and Sidwell. At school, she hangs out with her friends, wears jeans and T-shirts, like everybody else. She played soccer in the winter, and I used to see her mom at games. Now she's on the softball team and takes ballet lessons after school."

On the afternoon of the school's Winter Carnival, Chelsea volunteered to play the role of a fortune-teller. So did another girl, who took up position near her. A boy from the middle school recalled, "Everyone lined up in Chelsea's line, including me. She was saying funny things, like 'You have strange hands. You won't live that long. Your health will start to fail when you're sixty. Your love life won't start until forty. You will marry at forty-five and have a couple of kids. You'll have a great sex life.' I said, 'Thank you.' She said, 'Next, please.' When she noticed that nobody was in the other girl's line, she excused herself and left for a while. She's a real nice girl."

FANCYDANCER

Why the nondescript Northwestern city of Spokane was chosen as the site of the 1974 World's Fair is difficult to understand. The "attractions" are almost gone now, except for one that was there all along. Perhaps Expo '74's greatest legacy, or perhaps its only one, was to reveal a roaring stretch of the Spokane River by tearing down an inner-city rail yard that had obscured it from view for more than seventy years.

For centuries, the falls were a spiritual center for the Spokane, a nomadic American Indian tribe whose name means "children of the sun." The Spokane came here in the spring from their winter villages to camp in tepees by the riverbank, lured by the salmon that once ran from the Pacific up the Columbia River into this river. The tribe's first rite of spring was to fast and don beaded, feathered regalia for ceremonial dances to thank the Great Spirit for the salmon, their summer sustenance and their currency of sorts when they began to trade with the *suapi,* Spokane for "white man."

About a century ago, the *suapi,* in the form of the American government, sent the Spokane tribe upstream to a reservation sixty miles northwest of the city, in Wellpinit. After the Second World War, when the Indian war veterans came home to Wellpinit, they "modernized" their traditional dancing to reflect more of what they'd seen in the wider world. "Fancydancing" was the name they gave to the flashier, more improvisational version of their dance.

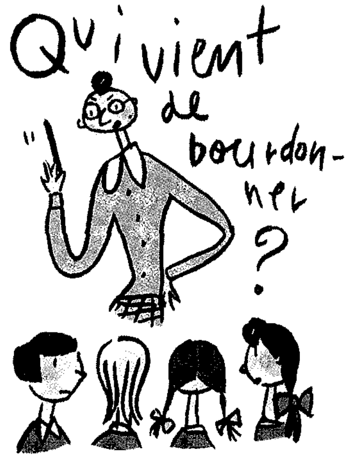
The Haleposey clan, pronounced roughly "Alepsie," was given a new name, too, but well before the Second World War. Russian fur traders who stopped by Wellpinit found the name indecipherable and rechristened the clan "Alexie" in their ledgers. Almost every afternoon, Sherman Alexie, twenty-six, one of the youngest generation of the Haleposey descendants, returns to the sacred site of his ancestors, where he shoots hoops on the basketball courts of the Spokane Y.M.C.A. It's how he caps off a morning spent at his kitchen table doing his own version of "fancydancing," which is the name he has given to his writing. This writing-and-basketball routine has gone on for the past five years, and so far it has spawned three small-press books, a poetry fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, and, this past January, a six-figure, two-book contract for a short-story collection and a novel from Grove/Atlantic Monthly Press. "Salmontravelling," evoking the salmon's sometimes bloody fight upstream, hurling itself over falls and rocks to spawn, is a word one finds sprinkled through Alexie's writing. It is also a word that describes Alexie's own journey. Alexie's obstacles were the joint inheritance of poverty and alcoholism. His mother supported the family by working at the Wellpinit Trading Post or selling quilts she sewed during the long evenings when her husband was drinking.

Alexie shut out this world by devouring books. By the time he was in fifth grade, he'd read the entire Wellpinit school library, auto-repair manuals included. At twelve, he announced to his family that he was going to Reardan

LA BOURDONNEUSE

TWENTY-FIVE years ago this month, I watched the streets of Paris erupt on the television screen. I was lying on a living-room floor in California, but as I watched the fires burn and the cobblestones fly I felt an extraordinarily intimate connection with it all, as though I were seeing the meaning of my own dream.

Only, it was not a dream but, rather, a symptom that I suddenly understood. The year before—my fifteenth—I had spent in a girls' school in Paris, and what came back when I thought of that year was a strange sensation at the base of my throat.


Qui vient de bourdonner ?

ISABELLE DERVAUX

People said it was a *lycée* in decline, but it was in a fairly elegant neighborhood and it certainly looked impressive. It had a high stone wall with an immense wooden door. If you were as much as a minute late, you had to ring a buzzer, which echoed through the inner court, and then a scowling man opened the door. He was the only male in the building, and this made his presence all the more fearsome. Recently, I saw again the French film "The Red Balloon." When the boy, Pascal, gets to school, he has to let his balloon go. That's exactly how it felt when you got to that door—you had to let something go. You hoped that it would still be there when you came out.

Once inside, we sat for hours, mute as stones, in drafty, high-ceilinged rooms. The teachers spoke endlessly, and as they spoke we wrote down what they said word for word on graph paper in small plaid notebooks. We wrote in our "Sunday handwriting," with a pen in one hand and a ruler in the other, and every now and again, when a teacher felt she'd made an important point, she'd say, "Underline and make a box around it." The only times we spoke were fraught with terror.

"Lamontier!" a teacher might call out. "Stand up! Button your smock! To the blackboard!"

"Yes, Madame."

"The Jura Mountains are composed of what kind of rock?"

"Boulders, Madame."

"*What?*"

"*Large* boulders, Madame."

If you shamed yourself in front of the class, you might try to make up for it by keeping your notebooks impeccable. At the dime store, the Monoprix, you could buy small packets of pictures to paste in at the relevant points: "View of the Jura Mountains," or "The Crowd Storms the Bastille."

I still remember how we were assigned our first composition that year: " 'The love of risk has its advantages and its disadvantages.' Begin by folding your paper in two. At the top of one column write 'Advantages.' Underline and put a box around it. At the top of the next column . . ."

In science class, we never touched a plant or stirred a solution or peered at an insect through a microscope. We sat silent in the dark watching slides of plankton, Louis Pasteur, and cowpox projected onto brown peeling plaster walls that made everything look like fried chicken. The teacher droned on in the background, but all I've retained is a single sentence, perhaps because it struck me as oddly heroic: "Drop by drop, the urine forms itself in perpetuity."

In sewing class, we made gray wool jumpers for nonexistent babies; it must have been a way of saving cloth. The teacher said we could bring our own fabric, but I was the only one who did. She hated me for my small piece of blue-flowered flannel, because it meant she had to change the thread on the one machine. Each time I came up, trembling, to have her sew a seam, she stooped and made runs in my stockings with her needle.

In art class, we had two projects the entire year. We had to draw a stuffed bird "feather by feather" and a moth-eaten corncob "kernel by kernel." "But, Mademoiselle," the teacher cried one day, seizing my pencil. "You *must* be more free!"

English class was the one relief. The teacher was kind, and was somewhat embarrassed to have a native speaker in the room, but I never corrected her—not even on the day she had us reciting "Negroes have crispy hair." This was the one time we could let our voices go without restraint, and we belted out phrases like war chants: "Grandfather, won't you have grilled kidneys for breakfast?"

Often, there were tears. That year was a crucial one for the girls: if they didn't pass that grade, it meant they were out of the *lycée* and into the working class. When exams were handed back, the teachers read out names in order of declining marks. As the list went on, there were cries of "*Mouchoir!*"—"Handkerchief!" Since my own future was not at stake, I took to bringing a stash of handkerchiefs for the others, and handing them out soon became one of my more important functions.

At the end of the year, several girls who were being dropped were called before the class. Their faces were crimson, and they looked down at their feet.

"And what will you do, Mademoiselle?"

"I will work as a baker's assistant, Madame."

"And you?"

"I will learn to cut hair, Madame."

These were the moments of drama in a tedium so extreme that it was—for me—almost exotic. I lived for the moment, around three o'clock each day, when the man in the adjoining building leaned out the window in his undershirt and watered the plants in his window box. It was a sign that outside the high stone wall that enclosed us living things were growing. One afternoon, he didn't appear, and I was overcome by utter desolation. Then I became aware of a catch in my throat. It wasn't pain but something that demanded release. With my face carefully composed and my lips closed, I made a sound. It was a strange sound, and at first I wasn't sure whether anyone had heard it or not. But the teacher fell silent. "*Qui vient de bourdonner?*" she asked in an icy voice. "Who has just—" I didn't know what *bourdonner* meant. I looked it up in my pocket dictionary after class and found that it meant "to hum" or "to buzz." That's funny, I thought. I wouldn't have known what to call it. But I knew it was something more drastic than a hum or a buzz.

Thereafter, the sound issued from me at least once a day. It wasn't something I planned; it had a life of its own. Though the teacher tried to remain impassive, as the weeks went on she grew increasingly enraged. "We are not going on until we find the *bourdonneuse*," she would say, her eyes narrowed to slits as she scanned our faces, row by row. The girls all knew that I was the guilty party, but they would never tell. After class, they teased me in an affectionate way; they were amused and somewhat awed by what they saw as a peculiar form of American bravery. I pretended that it was a kind of joke I performed for them, but it disturbed me. I'd heard of disorders where words came flying out of one's mouth at inappropriate moments. Was this the beginning?

Lying on the living-room floor in California, watching the students' shouting faces, I had an impulse to look up *bourdonner* in the big dictionary we kept on the mantel. Under the noun, *bourdonnement*, I found "a buzz . . . a hum . . ." Then it went on: "a drone . . . a boom . . . of bells . . . bees . . . a swarm of insects . . . a buzz in the streets . . . a crowd . . ."

So that's what it was. The teacher had been more right than she knew. That strange sound was the crowd in my throat—and there it was, wild in the streets of Paris.

—NOELLE OXENHANDLER

High School, thirty-two miles down the road from the reservation. He started there in eighth grade.

Alexie isn't quite sure what drove him to join every possible club and become the captain of the school's basketball team—called, to his family's amusement, the Reardan Indians. Nonetheless, his overachieving gained him admittance to the Jesuit Gonzaga University, in Spokane. Gonzaga had a derailing effect on Alexie, who until that point had never tasted alcohol. There, he discovered its numbing effect, and, after his long struggle to get to college, it soothed his increasing terror about what could or should come next. Rescue was provided by his high-school girlfriend, who was going off to Washington State University. Alexie transferred there with her after two years at Gonzaga. Although he continued to drink uncontrollably, he also began to write.

In 1989, from Washington State, he sent a few poems and short stories to *Hanging Loose* magazine, a Brooklyn-based literary biannual he'd seen while he was hanging around the university's library. He was first published in the magazine in 1990, and later a poetry-and-short-story collection, "The Business of Fancydancing," was published by the ancillary Hanging Loose Press.

Until 1992, Alexie had never been east of Missoula, Montana, but now sixty readings have taken him, and his sense of guilt and wonder, all over America. "There were as many opportunities for me to fail as to succeed," he says. "I know a hundred other stories of people on my reservation who failed. I'm amazed that I've made it, and feel guilty because I've left some people behind. Why do doors keep swinging open at the right time?" he asks. The answer must be all that fancydancing.

His latest and longest jump shot has been onto the national literary scene. Grove/Atlantic Monthly Press has made "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven" its lead book for the fall. Alexie recently came to New York for a reading at New York University's Loeb Student Center. He wore a special mugger's wallet he'd invented for the trip, and saw his first Broadway show. He met his agent and his publisher, but not for drinks: he won the struggle against drinking three years ago. When Indians succeed in the *suapi* world, Alexie says, "we can all hear our ancestors laughing in the trees."

WESTERN HEROES

FOR the past twelve years, environmentalists have been asking if anyone was home in the Department of the Interior. The answer now is a resounding yes. Not only is Secretary Bruce Babbitt present as the new Czar of Public Lands; he is a presence.

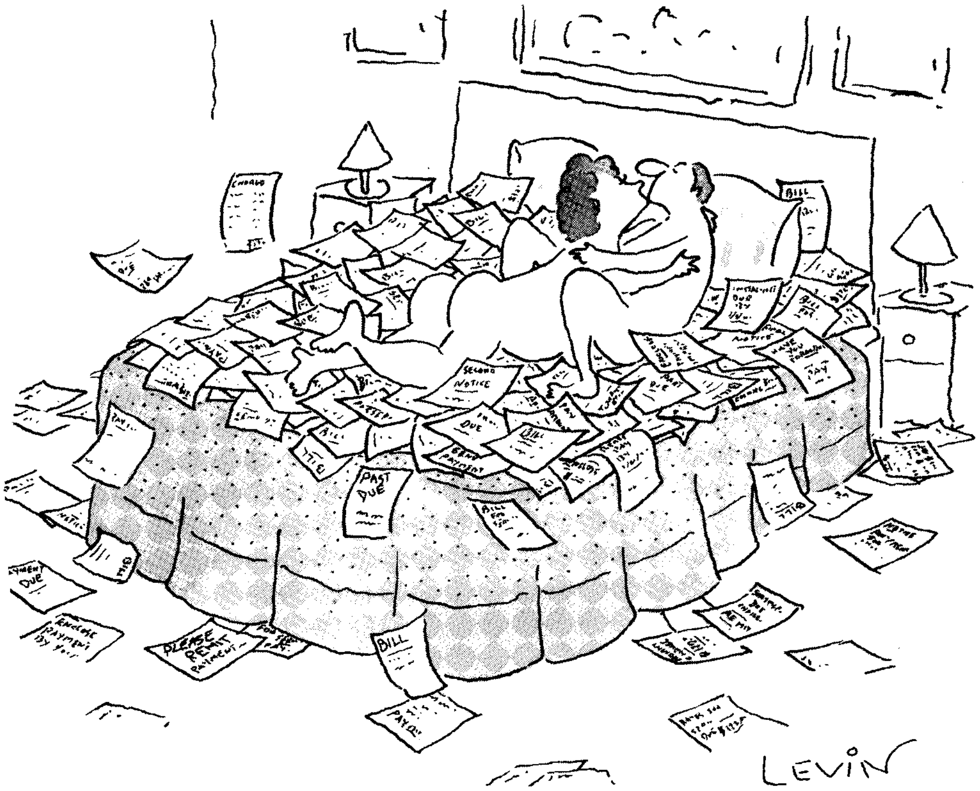
Consider this internal memo, which was circulated last month:

> The Department of the Interior invites you to a remembrance of one of our own. . . . In addition to being one of the greatest American writers, Wallace Stegner also worked with us at Interior—as "Writer in Residence" for a few months [during Stewart L. Udall's tenure] in the 60's and as an active and thoughtful member of the National Parks System Advisory Board. For many of us, his books give voice to the mission we share as Interior employees and stewards of public lands.

At the gathering to celebrate Wallace Stegner's life and words, on Thursday, April 22nd (nine days after Stegner died), Secretary Babbitt said, "When I first read 'Beyond the Hundredth Meridian,' shortly after it was published, in 1954, it was as though someone had thrown a rock through the window. Stegner showed us the limitations of aridity and the need for human institutions to respond in a coöperative way. He provided me in that moment with a way of thinking about the American West, the importance of finding a true partnership between human beings and the land. We've never yet succeeded in finding this balance between exploitation and conservation of our natural resources; that duality, that tension has never been resolved."

Mr. Babbitt paused and looked out over the audience, and added, "I reread that book the week after I took office. Each generation is given another chance to consider that balance."

The Secretary sat down, and for the next hour people stood and spoke in a manner more reminiscent of a Quaker meeting than of Beltway politics, to honor a man of American letters who created a community of spirited advocates of the American West.



Such a gathering would have been unthinkable under the political canopy of James Watt or Manuel Lujan. Indeed, there may be cause to wonder whether these former Secretaries of the Interior in the Reagan-Bush Administrations knew who Wallace Stegner was. The history of their actions as so-called "stewards of public lands" could lead one to suspect that their own literary inspiration ended with the Biblical injunction to "subdue" the earth.

"Angry as one may be at what careless people have done and still do to a noble habitat, it is hard to be pessimistic about the West," Wallace Stegner wrote in 1979. "This is the native home of hope. When it fully learns that coöperation, not rugged individualism, is the pattern that most characterizes and preserves it, then it will have achieved itself and outlived its origins. Then it has a chance to create a society to match its scenery." That one of the fortresses of government bureaucracy should be asked even to reflect on such ideas is a cause for hope.

An Interior Department employee was overheard saying, "I feel as if I were standing on the tennis court with twenty automatic serving machines pitching me dozens of balls at once, with each ball as big an issue as whether or not we should be drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The tasks before us are overwhelming."

Secretary Babbitt and two of his assistants, George Frampton and Jim Baca, share a passionate commitment to preservation. The new team has already created a National Biological Survey to catalogue all the species that are left in this country and to appraise the nation's over-all environmental health.

When Wallace Stegner was once asked whether he thought grazing should no longer be permitted on public lands and how this change might affect the cowboy and the rancher in the West, he replied, "When the hunting of whales became unacceptable, no doubt the whalers, too, had a difficult transition to make."

In "The Sound of Mountain Water" he wrote, "Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed . . . because it was the challenge against which our character as a people was formed." Stegner also said, "It may be the love of wilderness that finally teaches us civilized responsibility."

Bruce Babbitt seems to know that. ♦

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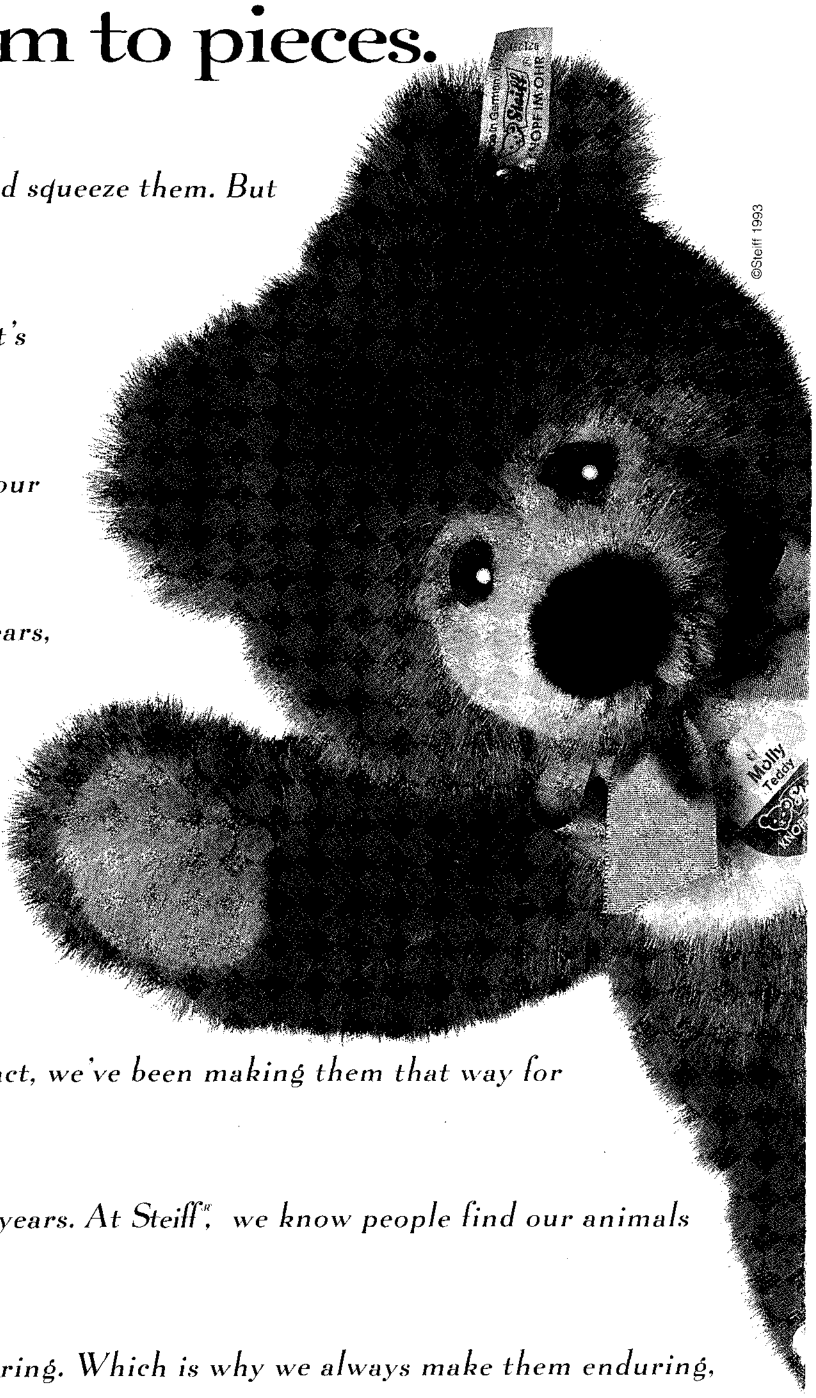
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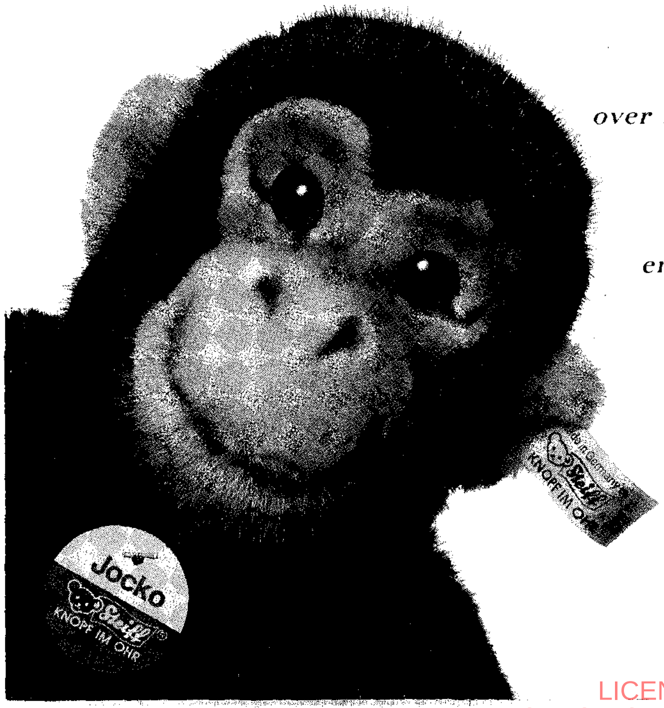
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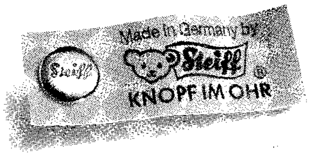
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OUR FAR-FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

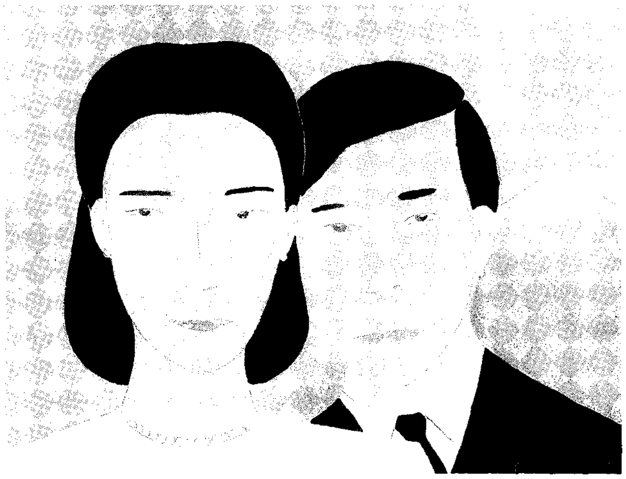
HOW TO MARRY A MIKADO

The decidedly un-Charles-and-Diana scenario of the wedding of Japan's Crown Prince to a Foreign Ministry whiz is the latest P.R. coup from a royal family that knows how to survive.

BY MURRAY SAYLE

BOY has to meet girl somehow, someday, somewhere, or our species and its odd mating rituals would soon be history. Those of us following the difficult profession of monarch, however, seem to be having special problems with the magic moment. Biology is involved, but also genealogy and politics. One honest mistake and a whole family—even a nation—could be permanently out of work.

A pity, then, that no wood-block artist or television camera captured just such an encounter in Tokyo on October 18, 1986. Boy, a good-natured prince, not bad-looking ("the Michael J. Fox type," Japanese women's magazines say), certainly met girl, a fledgling diplomat, a lively young woman with a brilliant mind. Something sparked: desire, emotional affinity, intellectual friendship, dynastic suitability, all of the above? Now, at last, they are to marry on June 9th—a happy ending to a courtship proverbially far from smooth. Meanwhile, the marital disasters of the British monarchy raise some questions: Is this true love? Will the marriage last? Can monarchy itself survive the age of Murdoch and mobile telephones? Is it any of our business?



Next month Japan takes a break from political scandals and economic gloom to celebrate the wedding of Masako Owada to Prince Naruhito, the future Emperor.

GEOFFREY PARKER

The last question is easiest. Yes, it is. The Prince is destined to be the hundred-and-twenty-sixth Emperor of Japan, the young woman his Empress. Japan, the world's biggest creditor, leader of industrializing Asia, is a very important country. Its outward image of rapacious companies, crooked politicians, and closemouthed bureaucrats is unappealing. Gleaming from the shadows, the Japanese royal family are emerging as living national P.R. treasures—studious, well behaved, among the very few Japanese favorably known throughout the world, models of a modern monarchy. One burden of the profession is legitimate public interest in its practitioners' private lives. We wish all young couples well, of course, but this couple raises special concern. Must it all end in tears and tabloid recriminations? Or are the tautly disciplined Japanese again showing us a harder but better way?

Respected, if not well known, abroad, the Japanese royal family are astonishingly popular at home, considering the recent dark history of their house—as popular as the British monarchy was, for instance, when Elizabeth II was crowned, in London, exactly forty years ago, and a teen-age Japanese prince tried to look as inconspicuous as possible among the delirious crowds. That young man is now Emperor Akihito, and Japanese polls regularly give him and his family a better than ninety per cent approval rating, compared with eighteen per cent for the present Japanese Cabinet, and with a recent finding that only one Japanese in a hundred disagrees with the proposition that all the nation's politicians are crooks and deserve to be in jail.

Republicanism, now sweeping Britain and the former colonies that still ac-

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knowledge Elizabeth II, has all but disappeared in Japan. Even the Japan Communist Party newspaper, *Akahata* (*Red Flag*), which once demanded that the Emperor be replaced with the dictatorship of the proletariat, has been ordered by the Party chairman to find more space for show-business engagements, to give readers a change from its blanket coverage of the forthcoming royal marriage. A wedding hall in Kobe is offering replicas of tenth-century Kyoto court robes for hire, seventeen thousand dollars for the afternoon, with refreshments, so that loyal subjects can emulate TV previews of the ceremony. Business circles hope for a "princess boom" to lift Japan's sluggish economy, and everyone, even in Japan, loves a lover. Many things have contributed to the popularity of Japanese royalty, not least the story of a star-crossed romance and its imminent moon-in-June culmination.

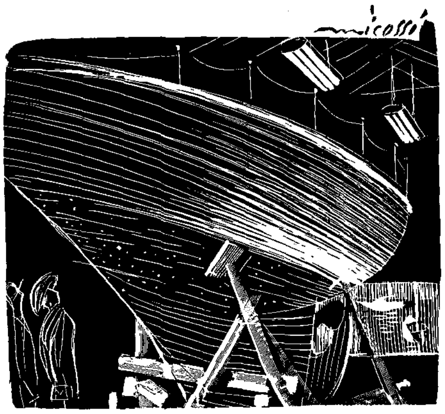
LIKE all love stories, this one begins with a meeting arranged by fate, though this one had more than a little help from other interested parties. The occasion was the Tokyo variation on the enchanted evening, a musical afternoon tea given in Tokyo's Akasaka Detached Palace in honor of Princess Elena, of Spain, in town to open a Goya show. Akasaka is a marble mini-Versailles that was built in 1909 to show how far Japan had already modernized. These days, it accommodates visiting dignitaries and lesser state functions. A musical tea may sound nineteen-twenties, but no orchestra played bingo-bango, no one danced the tango—rather, a Japanese string quartet performed sedate Mozart. The room, high-ceilinged and silk-draped, was uncrowded. White-gloved waiters served rice crackers, guests chatted decorously.

He was a studious young man with a sonorous, oddly religious title, Hiro no Miya (Shrine of Broad Vision) Naruhito, then twenty-six, heir to the Chrysanthemum Throne, which is the oldest hereditary job in the world. That afternoon, the Prince was at his bachelor quarters, a few hundred yards away, working on his master's degree in history, since awarded in Tokyo. He put aside his books and maps to drop in on the afternoon tea, partly to greet the Spanish princess, mostly for Mozart. He welcomed the visitor, he may even have heard some Mozart. More important (for him, and perhaps for us as well), he met, as romantic novelists used to say, his destiny.

She was Masako (Feminine Elegance) Owada, then twenty-two, eldest daughter of Hisashi Owada, the Director-General of the Treaty Division of the Foreign Ministry—a high-powered Japanese bureaucrat. Masako herself had just passed the entrance examination for her father's ministry—a rare feat for a woman, or anyone, for that matter. The exam is brutally tough; a pass puts the candidate among some eight hundred fast-track civil servants who in due course will run the ministries and, when and where it counts, Japan. Owada senior had arranged the invitation to the musical tea (with one phone call to another arm of the bureaucracy, the Imperial Household Agency). Masako-san likes classical music, too. And she could get useful experience meeting European royalty.

Some commentators have hinted that the Foreign Ministry may have already fallen in love with the Imperial Household Agency. The theory is not absurd. With no patronage to dispense, the Foreign Ministry needs all the *kone* (or high-level connections) it can find, and a proud father could be pardoned for thinking that no one was too good for his clever daughter. If this calculation was made, the lady in question was unaware of it. A former Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Toru Nakagawa, was deputed to present Miss Owada to the Prince. An acquaintance from the Prince's university days beat him to it. The meeting, we now know, went rather well.

No one seems to remember what the quartet played or (the Prince possibly excepted) what Miss Owada had on. People seldom remember her clothes. Her lively features promise to wear well, but she is no beauty queen. A modelling agency would note short stature (half an inch taller than the Prince's five feet four inches), prominent nose, determined chin, crooked teeth. (Japanese call them "eight-tiered teeth," radiating a smile in that many directions, and find them fetching, like Western dimples.) A natural athlete (tennis, skiing), she moves gracefully. On a Tokyo street, she could be one of the interchangeable female millions Japanese call O.L., office ladies. Five minutes' conversation—in Japanese, English, or French, each of which she speaks with native fluency, or in her useful German, Spanish, or Russian—will quickly disclose that the vivacious Miss Owada is very smart indeed.



What did they talk about? Not, we may safely guess, pop music. She loves the outdoors. He jogs, swims, climbs mountains, loves skiing and tennis. His passion is history. She is an economist immersed in international affairs—history in the making. He was back from Merton College, Oxford, where he had studied medieval river traffic on the Thames. She was just about to go to Oxford. (She already had a degree from Harvard.) She likes horses. His family has a twenty-horse stud farm, but no racehorses, or connections with the Japanese horsy crowd. He likes *gyoza*, Japanese steamed dumplings. She loves *gyoza*. They both relish Chinese-style spiced bean curd. A pair better fitted for the endless conversation of marriage would be hard to find. The Prince years later told TV viewers, "She is so pleasant she makes me unaware of the passing of time." Poets know the feeling. The Prince had fallen in love, Japanese style: he had found the partner he wanted to work with, for life. Miss Owada, however, had another promising career in view.

There were further discreet meetings, one of them under the respectable cover of the Japan-British Society. Naruhito wanted his family to meet his new friend. Rare guests who have dined *en famille* with Emperor Akihito, Empress Michiko, and their children report a delightful experience. Empress Michiko, the daughter of a wealthy flour-milling and soy-sauce-brewing family named Shoda, is a famous cook. Like any other Japanese wife, she serves at table as well. Their children often join them. (Prince Naruhito has a younger brother and sister.) After dinner, there is sometimes a family musical performance. The Emperor plays cello, the Empress harpsichord, Naruhito viola, the younger children violin. No European royalty matches Japan's in plain, hard-to-master skills. Masako was charmed and, she later confessed, somewhat awed—she plays no musical instrument herself. The Prince's parents, we know, like her a lot.

Masako started at the Foreign Ministry. The work was hard, the hours long. Much is expected of beginners on the fast track. The pair managed a few more meetings, never alone. The Prince met her parents, the Owadas. He proposed. She thought about it. Their next meeting was short, bittersweet. His Highness had been very kind, his proposal was an undeserved honor, nothing personal, some lucky girl . . . but no. She was not prepared to give up her career, even to be his wife and, one day, Empress. For five years, they did not meet, write, or telephone.

NOT every girl gets the chance to turn down a personable prince, especially in Japan. Masako's background helps explain why she did. The Owadas hail from Murakami, a small town (population thirty-two thousand) with a ruined castle on the west coast of the main island, Honshu. For some seven centuries, the male Owadas were samurai—hereditary men-at-arms—serving the lords of Murakami, a family named Naito. (*Samurai* comes from the verb "to serve.") The snowy west is the poor side of Japan. To make things worse, the Naitos were among the losers of a great battle in 1600 against the Tokugawa shoguns, who went on to be the military rulers of Japan for the next two hundred and sixty-seven years, and they were on the wrong side again in 1867, when the last shogun was overthrown. The Owadas were thus the poor, prickly-proud retainers of a hard-luck lord, the kind who often went without supper but still picked their teeth in public to make a good show.

There were no female samurai—and, indeed, a warrior would go to great lengths to conceal the fact that he had a wife, referring to her when he had to as *kita no kata* ("the person from the north," the danger direction for sneak attacks, and the cold side of the conjugal futon). Samurai daughters became samurai wives, expected to follow the same stern code of obedience, frugality, and lifelong loyalty. When Emperor Meiji died, in 1912, his former chief of staff, General Nogi, killed himself with a sword, "to follow his lord in death." Nogi still felt bad about the suicide charges he had ordered during the Russo-Japanese War, costing thousands of lives, including his two sons'. His wife, Shizuko, who had ordered no suicide attacks, had no duty to the Emperor, and still had children and grandchildren at home, knelt down and cut her throat with a penknife to follow *her* lord in death. The demure Masako Owada comes from a long line of samurai, and has not forgotten it.

In the shoguns' peaceful days, the samurai became administrators, scholars, clerks, eventually men in business suits serving governments, or corporations powerful enough to rival governments. Samurai scholars study not for learning's sake but to test skill and will, with examinations just another enemy to receive a banzai charge. Their spiritual descendants give Japan its highly motivated middle management—fearsome competition for us simpler souls just trying to make a buck. The daughter of samurai intellectuals has, we may be sure, seen it as her duty to marry her crown prince. Very likely, she wants to as well—but, as the equally ambition-driven Jay Gatsby once said, such feelings are secondary, "just personal."

MASAKO OWADA'S paternal grandfather was the headmaster of a famous high school—a Mr. Chips figure, with devoted former students throughout the civil service. He had five sons, all of whom graduated from Tokyo University, the nursery of the Japanese bureaucracy. One son is a university professor, another is the chief of the national tourist agency, one is a lawyer, another is a ports-and-harbors inspector, and Masako's father, Hisashi, is now the permanent head of the Foreign Ministry, next step Ambassador to the United Nations. Owadas have brains, and they have quite a tradition to uphold.

Masako's mother, Yumiko, also comes from a samurai clan, named Egashira. Since the Egashiras hung up their swords and took to reading books, they have produced university professors, another high-school principal, two admirals, a nationalist literary critic, and—the skeleton that every family closet needs—Masako's grandfather, the banker Yutaka Egashira, who in 1973 was sent to sort out a problem at a client company, the Chisso Chemical Corporation. The problem was organic mercury that the

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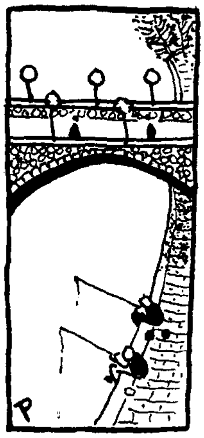
firm had been pumping into the Bay of Minamata, poisoning hundreds of local fishermen and their families. Egashira negotiated compensation equalling two hundred million dollars, partly paid by the government. He did no polluting himself, but any compensation can always be more generous. Journalists who noticed the Prince's interest in Masako guessed that her link with the Minamata scandal had poisoned her chance of becoming crown princess. The problem was with her.

Until this year, Masako led a very normal life—normal, that is, for a diplomatic brat with an ambitious father. The family owns a modest ferro-concrete house near the Foreign Ministry, where Masako still lives and helps her mother (who has a degree in French and once worked as a secretary with Air France) with the chores. The family dog is a terrier called (in French) Chocolat. The family has never had domestic help, which is all but unknown in Japan. Masako has younger twin sisters, and they are not exactly dunces, either: Setsuko rides a motorbike and studies anthropology; Reiko works for the United Nations, in Hanoi. But in Japan rank by seniority is all (even the birth order of identical twins counts, and one is "older sister" to the other for life), and Masako clearly carries the family's ambitions.



When Masako was three, her father was sent to the United Nations, in New York, and here Masako started acquiring unaccented American English. The family then went to Moscow, where she began Russian. Back in Tokyo at seven, she bred rabbits and wanted to be a vet. In a Catholic primary school specializing in the problems of "returnees"—children who have lived outside Japan—she captained the softball team, pitched, and batted fourth. Upon winning a tournament, she sipped orange juice from the trophy cup. She started French and German, and one night she attended a secret cookie party—a notable piece of self-indulgence.

In her first year in high school, in Tokyo, her father was appointed to teach international relations at Harvard. The family followed. Masako enrolled in Belmont High, in suburban Boston. After Belmont and more softball, Masako enrolled in Harvard herself, studying (on her father's advice) economics under Jeffrey Sachs, who has since been an adviser to both the United States and the Russian governments, among others. Her thesis, "External Adjustments to Import Price Shocks: Oil in Japanese Trade," is an unsentimental, well-argued piece of econometrics, on a topic—Japan's long-standing trade surplus—often selected by Japanese students, who can read the statistics in the original. In gaining a future empress, the world has not lost a great theoretical economist, but Japan is short a very hardheaded trade negotiator, who is skilled at using precise numbers to puncture cloudy generalities. Masako left Harvard in 1985 with a B.A. magna cum laude, enrolled in Tokyo University, soon afterward sat the Foreign Ministry exams, went to hear Mozart, and, as we now know, met *her* destiny. But before that happy ending Masako had a lot of work to do.

Long fascinated by another set of tea-drinking offshore islands that once dominated the world, also for no apparent reason, the Japanese Foreign Ministry likes to give its diplomats a British polish, even some British snootiness. Hisashi Owada spent four years at Cambridge. The ministry sent his daughter to Balliol College, Oxford, for two years to read her father's subject, international relations. She discovered the same Chinese restaurant that the Prince had found (great spiced tofu!) five years earlier, skied in Switzerland, and sometimes went to London to collect her mail at the Japanese Embassy, where they kept a fatherly eye on her—partly because she was still occasionally mentioned as a possible princess, more because she was the boss's daughter. Most nights, she studied.

Back from Oxford, Masako was assigned to the second section (trade) of the North American Bureau of the Foreign Ministry. In perfect English, she was soon interpreting for visiting big wheels, like Secretary of State James Baker; drafting speeches for Prime Minister Naboru Takeshita (later disgraced in a financial scandal); and negotiating two of the thornier areas of the never-ending American-Japanese conflict—the Japanese Bar Association's rule against the practice of law in Japan by foreigners, and especially Americans, and the failure of American semiconductor manufacturers (who invented them) to get even a fifth of the huge Japanese market. Tirelessly defending Japan's position, she made frequent trips to Washington. Back in Tokyo, she was at the office most nights until 9 P.M., sometimes until 5 A.M. Weary colleagues called her "the girl who doesn't need sleep."

From Japanese TV, we have glimpses of Masako over the next few years: cooking supper for her parents (she has a diploma in Japanese cuisine); tiny behind a battered gray-steel desk that is piled high with work, in a crowded office at the ministry; trying out for an informal girls' wrestling team under the ring name of Nancy; shopping for clothes (off the rack, not designer: her most expensive garment was a coat that cost fifteen hundred dollars and of which dozens have been sold). A friend recalls her playing duck-duck-goose, a noisy children's game, with a couple of heavyweight American journalists and other Harvard alumni after a meeting of the Harvard Club in Tokyo. (Keeping in touch with foreign news media is part of a junior diplomat's job, and the trade surplus eventually flags as a conversation piece.) We see her dandling other young women's babies as, one by one, her school and university friends married and started families. Living at home, everybody's aunt, Masako seemed to be settling contentedly into the style of a Japanese career woman, married to her job.

WHILE Masako led a diligent, driven life of work and no play, the Imperial Household Agency, which comprises hundreds of palace officials, was busy finding her rejected prince a bride. In Japan, marriage is not a matter of choice but a social obligation for everyone, and doubly so for eldest sons, who alone can continue the *honke*—the main trunk of the family tree. Thirty, which the Prince was pushing, is leaving it late for a man, while the mid-twenties are about the outer limit for young women. Live-in boyfriend-and-girlfriend relationships are rare in the Owadas' social class, and thus, if they are attempted, are liable to cause scandal. The resulting intimacy gap has bred the profession, or hobby, of *nakodo*—go-betweens, who still arrange most marriages, or, as my Japanese friends insist, arrange meetings with a view to marriage. They not only match mates but also preside at the wedding banquets, and act as peace consultants in subsequent rows.

Love, or make-your-own-mistake, marriages are thought of as an interesting Western idea, like hamburgers, but, to be on the safe side, many couples still involve a go-between as insurance. The marriage of Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko was billed as a spontaneous romance after a chance meeting on a tennis court, but the fateful game was in fact planned by the Imperial Household Agency, with the help of an economics professor, Shinzo Koizumi, who was a friend of the bride's family. After a difficult start (middle-class Michiko found the court protocol, the snobbery, and the lack of any clear role for herself stifling, and suffered something like a nervous breakdown), the marriage has proved an outstanding success. Statistics seem to support the Japanese notion that arranged marriages last longer than those inspired by lust, desperation, or it-seemed-a-good-idea-at-the-time: the divorce rate is barely a quarter of America's. Not expecting the moon helps, too: asked on his twenty-fifth anniversary how he found married life, Akihito replied, "It's not too bad." Married poets know the feeling. The hundreds of palace officials saw no problem in finding his eldest son a suitable wife.

Knowing nothing of the Owada setback, the Japanese were puzzled when this turned out to be mission impossible, almost as if Japan itself were being rejected. On paper, Naruhito looked like the answer to any mother's prayer—not assertive or competitive (why should he be?) but cheerful and intelligent, a thoroughly nice young man with excellent prospects. His upbringing was, as royal childhoods go, reassuringly normal. Until he was thirty, he lived with his parents and brother and sister, the first of his line to do so. Much of his childhood was spent at Hayama, south of Tokyo, where the royal family has a modest-sized seaside villa with a view of the endless procession of export-laden ships sailing out of Tokyo Bay. The Prince was fired with an early interest in history and geography, his best school subjects. He attended Gakushuin, in Tokyo, a school that was first set up, in Kyoto, for children of the imperial family and the old aristocracy, and then spent two years at Oxford.

At Oxford, he made his own bed and did his own washing, once flooding the laundry when his trousers caught in the college washing machine. Back home in Tokyo, he finished his thesis, "A Tentative Review of Transportation in the Inland Sea of Japan in the Medieval Age," for his master's in history. Like his father, the Prince spends a lot of time at official functions and religious rites, not all of them publicized. Like his parents, he often goes to concerts and art galleries. (He has neither car nor driver's license.) In the evenings, he mostly stays at home, studying, listening to music, and seeing a lot of his parents and siblings.

The quiet, lonely lives of the Japanese royal family come not from standoffishness but from the restrictions of rank. Japanese rarely, if ever, entertain anyone except relatives at home, and feel genuinely uncomfortable in informal meetings with persons of higher or lower social rank; it involves, among other hurdles, the use of stilted "respect" language, with a complex vocabulary and grammar that many young people do not speak correctly. No one outranks a prince except an emperor, so few Japanese ever mix socially with the royal family.

Exceptions are old school friends, who meet on a basis of strict equality, and the Prince often attends high-school and college reunions in the private rooms of Tokyo Chinese restaurants. His high school separated the sexes, so these tend to be all-male affairs. One old friend, an Australian businessman named Andrew Arkley, whose father was once a master plumber, was an exchange student at Gakushuin and sees the Prince regularly. Female foreigners are exempt from the rules of rank, too, and the Prince was delighted when Brooke Shields accepted his invitation to tea at the palace.

Orderly succession is an important advantage of monarchy, so the Imperial Household Agency set up a three-man team to find the Prince a suitable, fertile wife. Among those considered were upper-class young ladies who had been at the Prince's school and university in Tokyo, and the daughters of court officials, high-ranking bureaucrats, and selected business tycoons. Excluded, with the

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help of a retired public prosecutor, were the daughters of politicians—particularly those convicted of or indicted for bribery, or liable to be (which meant most of the Japanese political world)—and the offspring of financiers with big exposure to the property market (nearly all of them). The screening committee is reported to have come up with three hundred eligibles—a list whittled down by high-level conferences to a hundred "perfect women."

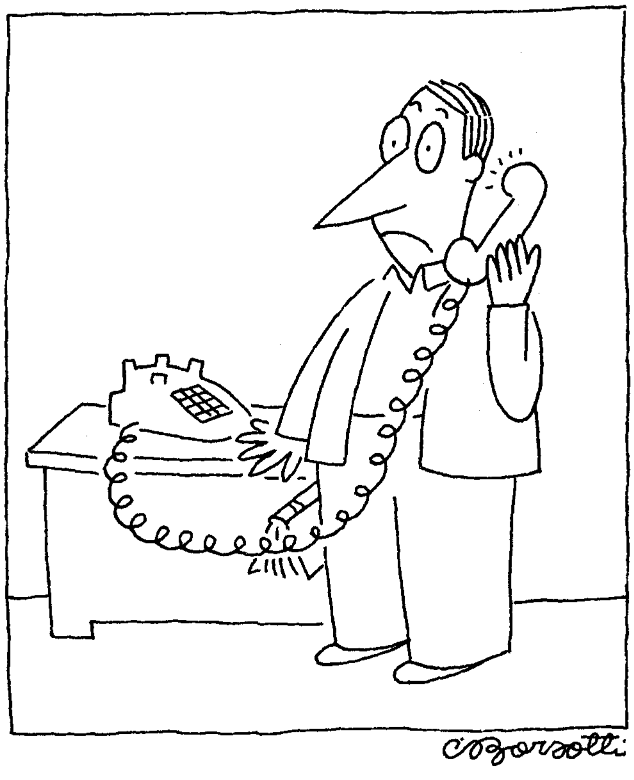
Their curricula vitae and photographs were submitted to the Prince in sealed brown envelopes. He is not known to have actually met more than two or three of the candidates, and then only to show himself as willing to do so. Cars with tinted windows were photographed entering the Akasaka Palace, but they turned out to be carrying officials with more lists. One by one, princess prospects surfaced in the media, were trailed by photographers, shyly refused interviews, gave up, and married other people.

On his thirty-first birthday, Naruhito was invested as Crown Prince and was asked at a press conference, rather pointedly, about his marriage plans. He was not against the idea, he said, and he went on, "In the sense of abstaining from luxuries, I prefer someone who has the same plain tastes and modest money sense as myself. A cultured person who appreciates simple beauty. Not a person who wants to buy this and that at, say, Tiffany's, in New York." While not, perhaps, sound economics—purchases at Tiffany's would at least come off Japan's trade surplus—the Prince seemed to have someone in mind. When it was reported that nervous prospects were being scared off by all the publicity, the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association agreed to a three-month news blackout on the search for a crown princess—a blackout that, reluctantly, was later three times renewed. Still no candidate surfaced.

The lack of success was all the more puzzling because the bureaucratic matchmakers believed they were following the long-established rules of their craft. The Japanese go-between looks for shared interests, compatible views of what is important in life, similar social background, matching hobbies, and not too great a difference in age, height, or level of education. The chemistry, they believe, can be left to nature. The trouble was that all these requirements pointed unmistakably to the one candidate who had declared herself unavailable—Masako Owada. In theory, only the members of the former aristocracy—some five hundred *kuge* families living in haughty austerity in Kyoto—stand on the same social level as the royal family, to whom they are all related, as well as to each other. The Tokyo-based royal family, however, has rather lost touch with the Kyoto crowd. The Owadas, for their part, are authentic aristocrats of the intellect, and so command much more deference among modern Japanese.

It may be instructive to consider what a Japanese go-between might have made of another royal match, if outsiders had, improbably, been consulted. The bridegroom was an opinionated onetime fighter pilot, aged thirty-two, with a degree from Cambridge and a string of former and present girlfriends, and was concerned with grouse shooting, architecture, and the environment. His beautiful bride was twenty and shy; came from a broken home; had dropped out of finishing school; was interested in clothes, swimming, and pop music; and was a former children's nanny and kindergarten teacher. A glamorous couple, yes, but . . . No Japanese matchmaker would have been surprised to read, less than a year and a half after that royal wedding, a report by the London gossip writer Nigel Dempster that the Prince of Wales had become "a desperately unhappy" man. His princess had become "a very willful and spoiled girl," said Dempster. "Suddenly, getting this enormous power, having people curtsy and bow to her, doing everything she wants, she's become a fiend. She has become a little monster." No one can ever know what happens between a husband and wife, of course, but we can hear a Japanese matrimonial expert sucking his teeth sympathetically and saying, "*Sō naru to omatta yo!*" ("Well, I thought so!")

JAPAN'S own princess crisis came to a head last summer. Restive at the third news blackout, the Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association threatened to re-start the waltz of the candidates. The Prince, nearing thirty-three, told the members of the princess-search group at the Imperial Household Agency that they were wasting government time—that if they could not come up with a second Masako Owada he intended to stay single, whatever dynastic complications ensued. At the Foreign Ministry, Masako Owada was being mentioned as a future ambassador, perhaps successor to her father as the head of the service. (No Japanese woman has yet reached vice-ministerial rank.) Her career was approaching a first overseas posting, which by custom is some Third World capital with undrinkable water. This, in turn, meant a personal point of no return. Few men—especially Japanese men—would be ready to travel the world as a diplomat's husband, so marriage would be possible, if difficult, only within the service. Japan has had one woman ambassador, to Finland, and her husband was at the same time Ambassador to Nigeria—



ROSEANNE JUST GOT WORD THAT **YOU** DIDN'T WATCH THE TOM ARNOLD SHOW.

not a very satisfactory marital arrangement. Masako Owada has friends among her male colleagues, of course, and office gossips predictably had them married, but the truth was harsher: realistically, she would have to choose, and soon, either marriage and family or a career of bright promise. She did, however, still have one faithful suitor, who had a job in Tokyo and could offer the prospect of family travel, and who was still doggedly proposing a marriage that even a conscientious father would agree was in the line of duty.

Japan's bureaucratic old-boy network broke the deadlock. One of the search leaders—Shoichi Fujimori, who was the Grand Steward of the Imperial Household Agency—mentioned the problem to an old school chum, Kensuke Yanagiya, who was a former vice-foreign minister and had an influential senior-junior relationship with his successor, Hisashi Owada. Father agreed to raise the Prince's suit with daughter. We can only guess what was said, or unsaid, but to have one of its own as Empress would be at the very least a major coup for the Foreign Ministry. Masako Owada, after much persuasion, agreed to take tea with the Crown Prince at Yanagiya's house in Tokyo last August 16th. It would be their first meeting in five years.

The Prince arrived in a curtained station wagon, Masako Owada by subway. Yanagiya hovered in the background. This seems to have been a catch-up session. The next encounter took place, under even deeper cover, beside the Imperial duck pond at Ichikawa, near Tokyo, last October 3rd. Between the quacking and the splashing, the Prince renewed his suit. Masako asked for more time. On October 20th, she telephoned. Still no.

It cannot, however, have been no in thunder, for the Prince took to calling Masako at her parents' home after work (not by radio telephone). On December 12th, when the news blackout was soon to expire, she visited him at his bachelor quarters in the Akasaka Palace, with only an aide present. There were more telephone calls, a key one reportedly being from Empress Michiko, who was from much the same social stratum as Masako. The Empress, one of the most admired women in Japan, is said to have convinced Masako that she would at least have no mother-in-law trouble. Masako finally said yes—"not without misgivings," she later confessed on TV—on December 19th (in ironic counterpoint, ten days after Prince Charles and Princess Diana announced their separation). The Japanese pair had met perhaps a dozen times, never alone. What Masako actually said was "I shall do my best to be of service to Your Highness"—an unusual way for a Harvard graduate to accept a proposal, perhaps, but General Nogi's wife would have understood. Neither Masako nor the Prince had a realistic alternative to the other, if they hoped to marry at all—not a bad working definition of true love, come to think of it.

In the meantime, last-minute checks were being run on the Owada family tree. This well-publicized research into the pedigrees of all the prospective candidates has been vigorously protested by a militant organization called the Buraku Liberation League. While the league has nothing against Masako Owada or the Crown Prince personally, it does have a point. *Burakumin* ("village people") is the current euphemism for some two million descendants of Japanese outcasts, formerly known by such names as *hinin* ("non-human") and *eta* ("filth"); for reasons unclear even today, *burakumin* were condemned to do ritually unclean work, like grave-digging and slaughtering, at least a thousand years ago. Some say that the original *burakumin* were prisoners of war brought from Korea.

To this day, Japanese private detectives are kept busy combing family records for traces of *burakumin* taint on behalf of companies hiring staff and of families, even royal ones, contemplating marriages. Indisputably Japanese, and indistinguishable from other Japanese, the *burakumin* are a textbook example of the mechanics of pure prejudice: the need for any tight-knit tribe, group, or nation to have an "other," someone outside, someone to reject; and the resulting loss of self-esteem by the rejected. The Owadas were predictably untainted.

"While they are snooping for dirt in her family, what about his?" a left-wing friend complained to me. "He's descended from a lunatic, a suspected war criminal, scores of adulterers." The Japanese monarchy has indeed a long history, some sixteen hundred years, with many ups and downs. The Emperor does not

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possess a throne, a crown, or a dominion of the European type, but essentially holds a religious office. Akihito is the Emperor and his son is the Crown Prince because they are hereditary chief priests—theoretically, direct descendants, and symbolic lovers, of Amaterasu Omikami, goddess of the sun and founding deity of an ancient Japanese clan by the name of Yamato. The origins of both clan and goddess are obscure—deliberately so, because archeologists have been forbidden for centuries to dig for evidence in the likeliest places, which are the enormous tombs of long-dead emperors in and around Nara, the ancient capital. There are similar tombs in South Korea, and there Japanese bureaucrats can no longer seal their secrets. In recent years, irreverent Korean spades have unearthed many of the missing clues.

The Japanese monarchy itself seems to have originated, along with the deepest layers of the Japanese language, somewhere in north-central Asia. It arrived in Japan, according to much evidence, sometime between the first and the fifth centuries, with a clan of horsemen armed with iron swords who crossed the sea in "stone boats"—apparently an early piece of Japanese ingenuity. The Korean tombs have yielded iron horse trappings and fold-up gold crowns, suggesting to some scholars that the invaders brought with them their political system: a shaman, or priest-king, who served the goddess, and an operational military commander, who took care of worldly business. Together, they set up a kingdom between Nara and Kyoto, a flat, fertile plain surrounded by mountains, from which the name Yamato derives. Yamato is the ancestor of the present Japanese state.

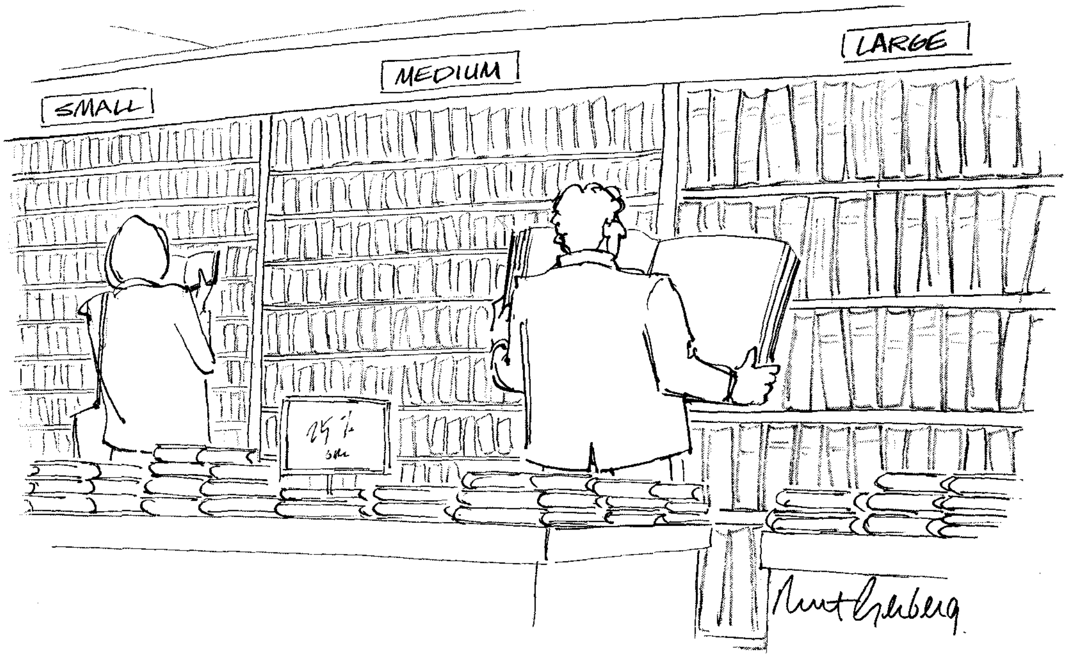
The two-person team at the head of government, one hereditary and the other selected (usually self-selected) for ability, is a very old idea, and it keeps recurring in human history. The hereditary principle works well in the priesthood, where continuity is vital and quality hard to control. Talent counts for more among warriors and their peacetime equivalent, politicians, whose essential gifts, particularly luck, seldom descend from father to son. By the sixth century A.D., when missionaries from Korea brought Buddhism to Japan, and, with the new faith, Chinese characters, ink brushes, and the beginning of written history, the two-tier system of government was well established. The team eventually took the form of the Mikado, or Exalted Gate, behind which the Emperor wooed the sun goddess with magic, prayer, and sacrifice, and the Shogun, the Great Barbarian-Subduing General—or, as visitors addressed him, the Tycoon (*Tai-kun*, "Great Lord")—who actually ran the government. In terms of survival, the dual system has a lot going for it. With the Mikado now renamed the Emperor, and the Tycoon deconstructed into Japan, Inc., an alliance of great competition-subduing exporters, it flourishes to this day.

The balance, however, has been fragile. An emperor too remote from the people (in the Kyoto days, loyal subjects were allowed to see only his feet) becomes a cipher, a sort of portable shrine wheeled out occasionally to show that the government has the support of the goddess. If, on the other hand, an emperor is too human, too hail-fellow-well-met, too much gossiped about, he loses the awed deference without which the dual system will not work. The Shoguns, who held the real power, eventually managed to get control of the succession by marrying their daughters to the sons of the Mikados. The result was almost eight hundred years of military dictatorship, continuing, on and off, until 1945. In all that time, only one uppity emperor, Go-Daigo, tried to rule in person. The shogun Ashikaga Takauji was not amused, and exiled the living god to a bleak island prison. Go-Daigo's name survives today only as that of a Tokyo pop group, whose fans mistake it for hip talk from the United States.

There is a simple explanation for the longevity of the Japanese monarchy. (Only the papacy, in principle elective, is older.) What has survived is not a family but the office of Emperor, and it was handed around like a parcel among powerful clans—the Tairas, Fujiwaras, Tachibanas, Minamotos, and others—who plotted, intermarried, futonhopped, and adopted one another's resulting children. The world's first novel, "The Tale of Genji," brings the gossip up to the eleventh century, and shows that palace private lives have changed little since. In essence, the Japanese royal family has no name, because it has not, until the living generation, been a genuine family but, rather, a useful fiction, cloaking the real power struggle going on elsewhere—notably in the Shogun's capital, Edo, today's Tokyo.

ALL this supposedly changed in 1868, when the last shogun was overthrown and a prince named Mutsuhito was brought from Kyoto to Tokyo to rule—theoretically, in person—as Emperor Meiji. (All these names ending in "hito"—which means "generous" or "humane"—are one-offs devised by court officials so that no emperor, much less an ordinary citizen, will have the name of another.) The first Westerners who met Meiji, in 1867, found a youth of fifteen with a shaved head, blackened teeth, and long lacquered fingernails—the standard outfit of an Oriental priest-king. Ten years later, Meiji was reviewing parades in Western military uniform, on a horse, a sword at his side, for all the world like his hero Wilhelm II (Kaiser Bill) of Germany. (Meiji had meanwhile studied German, and had also read "Self-Help," by Samuel Smiles.) The real ruler was not the young Emperor but the cabal of rich merchants, samurai intellectuals, and discontented gentry who abolished the shogunate.

Their aim was to modernize Japan, not because they admired much about the modern world (except its firepower) but because they wanted to forge an army, a navy, and an industrial base strong enough to fend off Western empire builders. Japanese conservatives like the Owadas resisted the changes, and there was some fighting. Like the rest of the samurai class, the Owadas got behind the new order when they were persuaded that the Emperor was actually a military man like themselves, to whom, henceforth, they owed their traditional loyalty unto death. To bind the rest of the population to the new, industrializing nation, the authors of the Meiji revolution-from-above looked back to the ancient legend of the sun goddess, who spends her nights in a cave and occasionally descends to earth to supervise and protect her favorite people, the Japanese.



Japanese folk religion, called Shinto ("the way of the gods"), which has traditionally included the sun goddess in its pantheon, is not unique. Buddhism is more of a philosophy than a religion, and Japan, like all Buddhist countries, still has its old gods and goddesses, who often serve as guards at Buddhist temples. Uniquely Japanese was the political use of a chance survival from prehistory to hold together an old nation as it lurched into the modern world—an attempt that centered on the half-forgotten origin of the emperors, that led to Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima, and the lost war, and that nearly got one emperor hanged for his part in it. Not only, said the Meiji ideologists, were the Yamato clan and its hereditary line of priests descended from the sun goddess, but so were all the other Japanese, the only difference being that the emperors were the *honke*, the main line, and their prayers to her were more effective than those of her other Japanese progeny. The Emperor was therefore everyone's living ancestor, the reflection of the sun goddess, and, as such, he shared her divine nature. Japan itself was a family of families, a village made up of smaller villages, each protected by its Shinto shrine. More practically, as the state religion Shinto gave the Emperor's servants—the bureaucracy—the authority of gods. They still have it.

A shrewd observer of prewar Japan, the German classical scholar Kurt Singer, described the fateful effect of the living-god theory:

> It nourished, in a society exposed to a host of disintegrating influences, acting from within and from abroad, the precious feeling that all Japanese were brothers and the conviction that they might look up to their ruler as to a father. Even the poorest and weakest member of the nation was made to believe that in some undefined way he was the bearer of the mysterious forces transmitted by the sun goddess to her posterity.
>
> The spirit of the small group never demonstrated its power, to bind and preserve, more clearly than at the time when the defeated Japanese rallied to their monarch as the pillar of their very existence—despite the fact that before the war he had endorsed the fatefully wrong decisions of his advisers and, after the war, had denied his special divinity in the New Year Rescript of 1946. The myth of imperial "divinity" had served to form a self-supporting pattern of emotions and attitudes of such structural strength that it could not be declared to be a mere symbol. It has probably never been taken literally except by half-witted fanatics and by half-learned foreigners.

Robert J. Smith, an anthropologist at Cornell University, adds:

> This much can be said, though: some people were put to death and many more were imprisoned because they professed not to believe this ideology; tens of thousands more went to their deaths for all the world as though motivated by it.

After 1868, the old Kyoto families, now called princes, marquises, and counts, continued the game of produce-an-heir within the moats of their new palaces—formerly the shoguns' castles. Emperor Meiji was the son of a concubine from the Nakayama family. He, in turn, continued the custom of dropping a bedtime silk handkerchief at the feet of the favored court lady on duty. One of them, and not his empress, was the mother of the next emperor, Taisho. Taisho's empress rebelled, and her eldest son, Hirohito, was the first crown prince of legitimate birth in a long series. Taisho suffered a mental collapse in 1920, owlishly gazing through his rolled-up speech instead of delivering it to Parliament. The puritanical Hirohito took over as regent in 1921, abolished concubinage in 1924, and ascended the throne on the death of his father, in 1926. Hirohito's own empress, Nagako (now ninety), was selected by court officials on the important ground that she was not a member of the fecund, overpowerful Fujiwara family.

The demilitarization of the Japanese monarchy was the great achievement of Emperor Hirohito, a partial reparation, at least in Japanese eyes, for his signature on the 1941 declaration of war. Hirohito took off forever his military uniform in November of 1945, renounced his divinity (he had never personally claimed it) in January of 1946, and, from that moment on, never reviewed a military parade, or spoke of the war other than in terms of loss and regret. Hirohito was not put on trial, as many urged, but the president of the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal, Sir William Webb, an Australian, argued that if any Japanese leaders were to be hanged (seven were), Hirohito, as their chief, should also die. The outlook for the monarchy was not sunny.

Fumblingly at first, Hirohito sought a viable role for himself and his dynasty. Initially, he tried to be a citizen monarch, clumsily throwing out first baseballs and touring factories and mines. A miner addressed him as "Ten-Chan"—roughly, "Empy-Baby"—and tried to shake his hand. "Let's do this the Japanese way," Hirohito said. Emperor and coal miner bowed solemnly in the lamplit tunnel—but he never again visited a coal mine. Trips to the United States, where he made his peace with Mickey Mouse and bought a watch at Disneyland, and to Britain were hardly P.R. triumphs. In Oxford, students pointedly turned their backs to him. The satirical magazine *Private Eye* used the incident on its cover under the jeering headline "NASTY NIP IN THE AIR," and advised, "Piss Off, Bandy-Knees." Hirohito could not have expected much better, and bore the abuse courteously.

Eventually, he settled down as a semi-recluse, receiving the Prime Minister of the day for a weekly political report and spending the rest of his time studying marine biology, an interest begun in his boyhood, at the Hayama seaside villa. Hirohito had real scientific credentials—in 1971 he was named a Fellow of the British Royal Society—and many publications. "The Crabs of Sagami Bay," his major work, carried the unusual credit "By Hirohito, Emperor of Japan." In the last half of his life, he had stepped back a thousand years, reviving the ancient Confucian idea of a monarch who rules by setting a good example in his public and personal life. When he died, in 1989, old enemies like George Bush, François Mitterrand, and the Duke of Edinburgh attended his funeral. Most Japanese believed that he had used his second career well, undoing some of the harm done in his first—a god who made good—but fear and mistrust of state religion followed him to the tomb. When his funeral service assumed a Shinto cast, the parliamentary opposition, headed by Takako Doi, the leader of the Socialists, rose in a body and headed for large temporary bathrooms provided as sanctuaries—an effective, earthy Japanese compromise.

THE present Emperor and Empress have made the next long step in rehabilitating and modernizing the Japanese monarchy, turning it, for the first time (under the influence of the middle-class Empress Michiko), into a recognizable Japanese family. Apart from being kept informed, the royal family have no political powers, but they are visibly not neutral on the issue of defense and war, the most divisive issue in Japanese politics. Akihito saw the burned-out ruins of Tokyo as a child. In his teens, he was tutored by Mrs. Elizabeth Gray Vining, an American Quaker writer of children's books. In 1946, Hirohito himself had asked for a woman, "a Christian, not a fanatic," to teach his heir, offering a salary of two thousand dollars a year—a sizable sum for a monarch whose remaining assets had just been estimated at seventy thousand dollars. Mrs. Vining, declaring her aim to be "peace and reconciliation," became a much admired teacher of Akihito over the next four years, and she was the only foreigner invited to his wedding, in 1959.

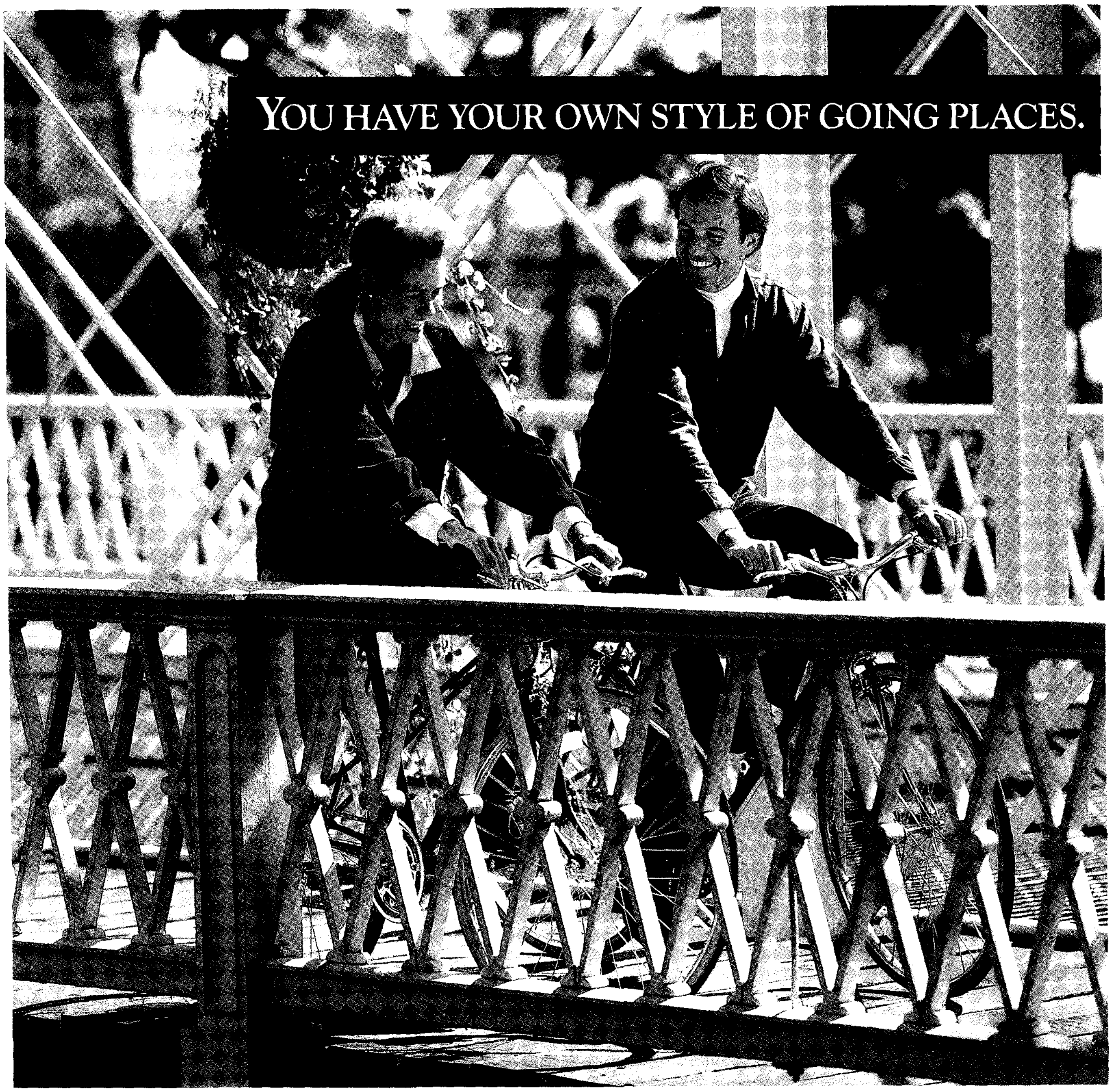
Akihito's personal anti-militarism was made clear on his first public engagement as Emperor. In a speech on Hirohito's death, the mayor of Nagasaki, a city of strong pacifist leanings, had urged Japanese to reflect on the late Emperor's and the Japanese nation's responsibility for the Second World War. A few weeks later, a small-time gangster (and neanderthal-nationalist) shot the mayor as he was leaving his office, seriously injuring him. By chance, Akihito had an engagement in Nagasaki to plant a commemorative tree soon afterward. He used the occasion for a well-publicized visit to the mayor and a tour of Nagasaki. (The mayor meanwhile had recovered.) No Japanese could possibly mistake the meaning of his visit, even though the bureaucrats of the Imperial Household Agency marred the effect by officiously deodorizing and hiding behind a bamboo curtain a pig farm that chanced to be near the tree-planting site.

The Japanese royal family are popular because they have something for almost everyone; like Japan, they have survived, and learned something in the process. In the eyes of older conservatives, the Emperor and the Empress and their son and his fiancée command respect simply because of their position (although a right-wing neighbor complained to me, "They're all Communists—they read the *Asahi Shimbun*," which is a newspaper with views similar to those of the New York *Times*). To the generation that remembers the war they symbolize the determination never to get involved in another—the widespread pacifist sentiment that has so infuriated outsiders trying to bully Japan into increasing its military spending or participating in warlike adventures overseas. A younger group sees the cosmopolitan, polyglot royal family as leading Japan's continuing exploration of the modern world—its search, still incomplete, for an accepted place among the nations.

Only the Japanese extreme right, mostly gangsters, are baffled by a monarch who is not interested in bringing the blessing of the sun goddess to a new military dictatorship. The goddess herself has become just another member of the Japanese pantheon (although her worshippers, mostly big corporations, have contributed one hundred and fifteen million dollars to the rebuilding of her shrine at Ise, near Nagoya, due to be completed this year). When Masako Owada's father sought guidance on her matrimonial dilemma, he prayed not to Amaterasu Omikami but to Hachiman, god of war, the ancestral deity of the Minamoto clan and an old samurai favorite, at a busy shrine near his office.

WHAT task awaits the couple about to marry? They belong to a more self-confident generation than their parents', and are less concerned about Japan's past. Japan's problems these days are not military or theological but economic. When Emperor Hirohito announced that he was not a god, he did not add that Japan was not really one big family, or that the Japanese could now be trusted to run their own affairs and did not need to be babied by an all-powerful bureaucracy. The gigantic trade surplus—a hundred and thirty-two billion dollars last year, fifty billion dollars with the United States alone—shows no sign of going away, and sooner or later is bound to lead to international trouble. One of its causes is the nation's relentless priority for Japanese products and Japanese interests over all others, enforced by a bureaucracy answerable not to the discredited politicians, much less to the Japanese people or to Japan's trading partners, but each member to its own carefully cultivated patch of domestic turf—the residual economics of Shinto, in fact.

This is the area on which the future Princess and Empress Masako is an expert. Considering that Japanese politics shows no sign of self-reform and is probably approaching terminal irrelevance, it is a lucky coincidence—if it is a coincidence—that someone who understands economics has said yes to a live-in posting near the center of events. Already, it is reported, the bureaucrat-jailers of the Imperial Household Agency are nervous about her. Three months ago, the shy bride-to-be was a fast-track bureaucrat herself. ♦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CORRIDORS OF POWER

CROSSING THE WHITE-SHOE LINE

Arnelle & Hastie is a minority-owned law firm that represents some of America's biggest companies—and it's shaking up the old-boy corporate-legal network.

BY NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN

IN the highest echelons of corporate law there is a new face. It belongs to H. Jesse Arnelle, a fifty-nine-year-old African-American, who is a founding partner of Arnelle & Hastie, one of the first minority-owned national corporate-law firms. He and his cofounder, William H. Hastie, have cracked the code, enabling their law partnership to enter the rarefied regions of power and money heretofore the preserve of white-shoed white men.

H. Jesse Arnelle: "I was taking on cases that other people wouldn't take on, because of the high possibility of losing in a very public way."

SCOTT HUNT

When Arnelle & Hastie opened its doors, in 1985, the corporate bar included only a handful of black firms. "Civil rights, plaintiff personal injury, family law, criminal defense—that's what black lawyers do. But it wasn't what these black lawyers were going to do," says Bill Hastie, who is thirteen years younger than Arnelle.

Today, Arnelle & Hastie has offices in New York, San Francisco, and four other cities; forty lawyers; and a client list that includes some of corporate America's most impressive names, among them A.T. & T., Coca-Cola, Du Pont, Chrysler, Shell Oil, United Airlines, Johnson & Johnson, SmithKline, Waste Management, Bank of America, and Sterling Winthrop.

The firm's appearance in the demesne of corporate law clearly signals the growing influence of minorities. Arnelle & Hastie refers to itself as "culturally diverse," and large companies are coming to regard such diversity as one of the values worth paying for in a law firm. Jesse Arnelle is being invited to join corporate boards, and not as a celebrity, not as a spent rabble-rouser who has been conveniently bought off, not as a lucky recipient of a set-aside program, not as a useful channel of influence into the Democratic Party, not as a freak or an exception to the rule. He is invited for the same reasons that white, male, Anglo-Saxon Protestant corporate lawyers are: because he has power.

When Jesse Arnelle and Bill Hastie resolved to create a minority-owned law firm with a national presence, Ronald Reagan was beginning his second term, and the emanations from Washington were such as not to encourage companies to go out and hire minority-owned law firms, or minority-owned anything else. "It was an audacious plan," Arnelle recalls. "It was pretty damn presumptuous of two guys like us to say they were going to build a corporate practice." Yet it was that kind of practice, and nothing less, that they determined to make for themselves.

Arnelle & Hastie started out with fifteen hundred square feet of space in San Francisco's Ferry Building, and a card table for a desk. Being new, the firm was free of some of the considerations that have kept minorities out of corporate law. Bill Hastie explains, "We made a conscious decision, which would be very difficult for some existing minority firms, that we were not going to represent plaintiffs. We don't represent plaintiffs except in commercial situations. If you have a modest, existing personal-injury practice, are you prepared to give it up on the potential, not the promise, that corporations are going to start to use you? That is a very tough choice."

When corporations do hire a minority firm, they may begin with only a small amount of business, testing to see whether the attorneys can deliver the goods. Even if the corporation's general counsel is free of generic prejudice, there are often fears expressed by others that such a firm may be substandard, filled with people who got through law school on quota instead of quality.

Hastie recalls, "There's a major corporation, and by major I mean in the top fifty of the *Fortune* ranking, where the corporate counsel said to me—he was being brutally honest—'We're going to send you a really, really small matter, and we're going to see how you do. If you do well on that, then sometime, maybe in a few months, we're going to send you another matter. It'll be a little bigger. There may be two years of this before we send you a "significant" case.' My response was 'I understand what you're saying. I don't like it, but except for my telling you this right now you'll never realize we don't like it.' And we hung in there with that particular corporation. We've represented it now on a number of six-figure cases, in terms of fees, but we went through two, two and a half years of gritting our teeth and being tested."

Some people are not temperamentally inclined to humble themselves before this kind of treatment, especially if they have been practicing for some years and know they are able attorneys. "I have a friend in another minority-owned firm who was going through the same process, was outraged, and saw the general counsel and really protested the policy quite vigorously," Hastie says. "The general counsel was unhappy. That firm still gets occasional business. It hasn't been cut off, but it never got any further. My friend was not wrong; he felt his experience and his accomplishments were such that it was insulting to be treated like that, and, in some ways, it is. But the concept of client insulting lawyer is different from that of human being insulting human being."

Arnelle seems so self-possessed, so obviously in command of himself, that he gives the impression of having long ago taken and passed all life's tests. A big man, standing six feet six, with a knuckle-cracking handshake and a soft, rich baritone voice, he is walking proof of the proposition that family cohesion and family values can be determinative, for he began life at the bottom in all things material.

Arnelle's father got as far as high school; his mother didn't. "I grew up poor," he says. "We lived in the first projects in New Rochelle. We were three boys, and we and our parents had one and a half bedrooms and a living room. I lived in the projects until I was out of college."

When Arnelle talks about himself and his career, he returns again and again to the example set by his parents. His was the fabled lower-class family with middle-class values. "My mother would work six and a half days a week. My dad always worked several jobs a day, and that just demonstrated to us early on the value of work, the value of doing the very best job. Whatever you did, it had to be done perfectly, whether it was making your bed, cleaning your room, washing the dishes, or cleaning out the furnace. My father would come behind us and show us how we could do it better. You can always improve the circumstances—whatever you're doing, you can always improve upon the quality."

Arnelle's mother was an illegal immigrant from Jamaica, who came to New York when she was fifteen. Five years later, she met Hugh Arnelle. They married, moved to New Rochelle, and had three sons, of whom Jesse was the youngest.

"My father grew up in rural Georgia," Arnelle says. "He was orphaned at age five and was raised by his older sister. He left town when he was fifteen and started working at different jobs. He worked in the coal mines of West Virginia and Pennsylvania and the silver mines in Colorado, and then came East and met my mother at a church social. He started a small, short-haul moving business. He had saved some money and was able to buy a little truck. He was always very good at doing mechanical things, and so he kept this truck going. He would go out and move pianos, or furniture, from one end of town to the other. He was a guy who was full of wisdom."

Arnelle's biography disconcertingly accords with American folk legend. He is the boy from the poor family that endows him with gifts of character beyond price, who applies himself, and who at life's critical junctures meets remarkable, disinterested people who give him the right kind of help. One such person was Beatrice Perlstein Schein, his high-school Spanish teacher—a woman whose legs, Arnelle remembers, had

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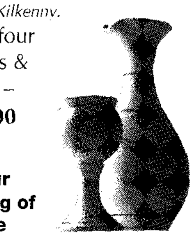
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"Darling, do you ever worry that we're becoming a sort of Merchant-Ivory production?"

• •

been badly crippled and who walked with crutches.

"I came into her classroom one day in my sophomore year, and I was unprepared for my class," Arnelle recalls. "She spent forty-five minutes calling on me to interpret, to translate, to read the whole damn lesson, and I stumbled and I couldn't read it and I couldn't remember the interpretations, couldn't conjugate the verbs correctly. My self-esteem couldn't have been lower. As I left that classroom, I was determined never to go back. I said I'd never let anybody humiliate me like that again. I was walking down the hall, and I felt somebody tapping on my back. There she stood—on crutches—with the massive shoulders she'd developed because she couldn't use her legs. I started to turn away very sullenly. She grabbed me. One crutch went flying across the hall. She was on one leg, and yet she pushed me up against the wall. She wasn't a big lady. She was determined that I was not going to ignore her. She got *right in my face* and said, 'You don't understand—you think I humiliated you because I wanted to. You humiliated yourself. Don't you ever come into my classroom or any other classroom unprepared. You have the ability to master any subject in the same way you have mastered that silly game you play—basketball or football, or whatever they call it. I will help you; I will help you one hundred per cent to be the student you can be. Otherwise, get out of my classroom and be just another athletic bum!' "

Arnelle was no bum, athletic or otherwise. At Penn State, he played football and basketball, and his basketball coach, Elmer Gross, underscored the lesson he had learned from Beatrice Perlstein Schein. "She taught me how to concentrate on the things you're weak in, what it is you're afraid of, the things you don't do well, and to figure out why you don't do them well. People say play to your strength, and that's true in a lot of ways, but it's your weaknesses you have to focus on, because that adds to your strength."

Elmer Gross showed how focussing on weaknesses could pay off for Arnelle. "One day, he took me out and said, 'Look, Jess, everybody knows you're going to go to your right, everybody knows you're going to shoot your hook shot and your jump shot, and when you get over there there's a whole gang of people waiting for you. So what you have to do is go to your left.' I went from being a guy who was making twelve, thirteen points a game to being one who made twenty-six points. I went from being a guy who was not going to be an All-American to being an All-American."

After serving in the Air Force, Arnelle worked his way through Dickinson School of Law, in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, doing a variety of jobs, which included playing weekend basketball as a semi-pro for fifty dollars a game. In 1962, he landed a job in Washington, as a Labor Department lawyer. One afternoon, he played in a touch-football game on the Ellipse between Labor and the Justice Department. Robert Kennedy, the Attorney General, was there, and it wasn't long before Arnelle got a call asking him if he'd be interested in working for the newly created Peace Corps, which was founded by President Kennedy and run by his brother-in-law R. Sargent Shriver.

His employment interview was in keeping with the cocky, studied informality and fun-loving arrogance of Kennedy-era Washington. Shriver's administrative assistant showed Arnelle into the office. "He says, 'Sarge, this is Jesse Arnelle.' Sarge says, 'Yes, I know.' And he throws a football to me all the way across the damn office. As the ball is coming over, he says, 'How would you like to work for the Peace Corps?' I catch the ball and he says, 'You're hired!' That's a true story, and I went to Turkey."

Arnelle learned Turkish and has kept up with the language and his contacts there, returning a score of times over the years for both business and pleasure. In due course, he fell in love with San Francisco, went to work for a corporate law firm there, and then quit to work in the federal public defender's office, because he wanted to polish his trial skills. "I tried twenty-one cases and won nineteen of them," he says.

Eventually, Arnelle put out his shingle. He did well, but as he reached his fiftieth birthday the disadvantages of going it alone bore down on him. He drew up a list of three or four African-American attorneys in San Francisco whom he thought highly of, with the idea of forming a partnership. Hastie's was the first name on the list. The timing was right. Hastie, also working for himself, recalls, "I had nights when I couldn't sleep. I was worried about backup. I hated being a solo practitioner."

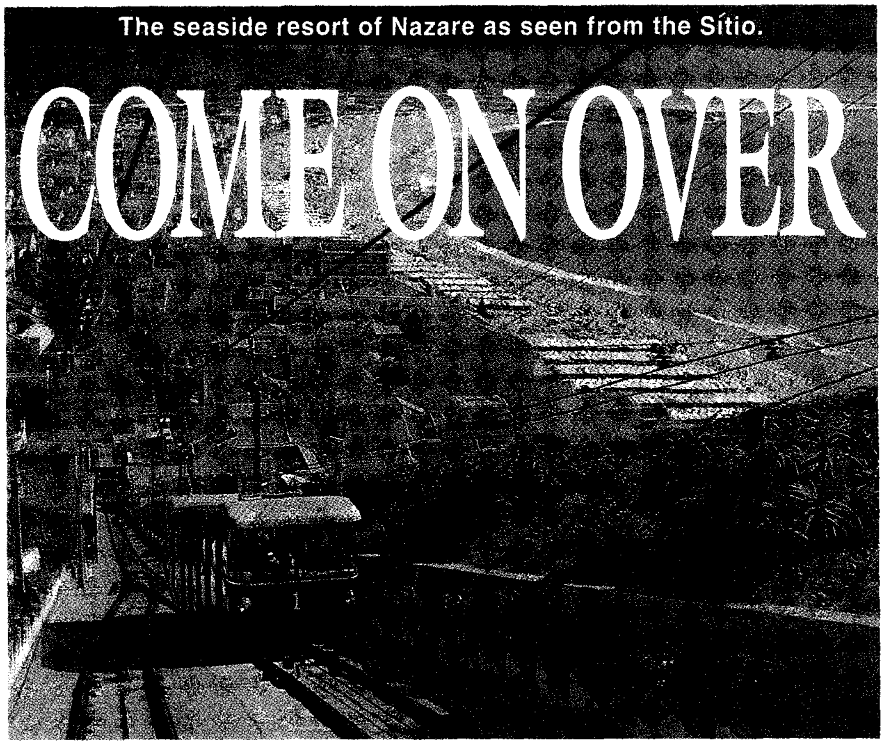
The first year, Arnelle & Hastie lost money, but then business picked up. The firm was retained by R. J. Reynolds Tobacco to help defend the company in the cigarette wars. It was the R.J.R. fees that made the difference.

"We realized when we took R.J.R. as a client that we would be subject to controversy," says William Hickman, an African-American attorney who became one of the firm's two managing partners. "My father was a heavy smoker and died of lung cancer. He died when he was a young man." Hickman is a non-smoker himself, but he is untroubled by the firm's having represented a cigarette company. In this, Hickman is no different from any other member of the corporate bar in the United States: Steven Brill, the editor of *The American Lawyer*, which has investigated tobacco-company legal representation, says that his staff hasn't been able to find a single instance of a cigarette company's being refused representation by a corporate-law firm.

"We agreed to represent them because their basic defense is that people ought to have the right to choose," Hickman says, and he adds, "The reason the tobacco companies are winning is that juries don't believe advertising can make a person smoke. Advertising cannot make you do something. When you were a kid, the first time you smoked you coughed your brains out. You have to work to become a cigarette smoker. Cigarette companies haven't paid a dime in damages."

One of the strategies that Arnelle & Hastie employed, Hickman says, was to retain the services of minority-owned advertising agencies to prevent their being used as expert witnesses against its client. "I worked with a lot of the black advertising agencies," he recalls. "One of the reasons I personally didn't mind was that it would bring to the attention of corporate America the richness of talent in black advertising agencies and in the black physician corps. We hired a whole range of African-American talent to demonstrate what the truth was."

In any event, Arnelle says, "It was the R.J.R. litigation that gave us the financial kick to build our infrastructure, be selective, and attract lawyers in the various disciplines we were looking



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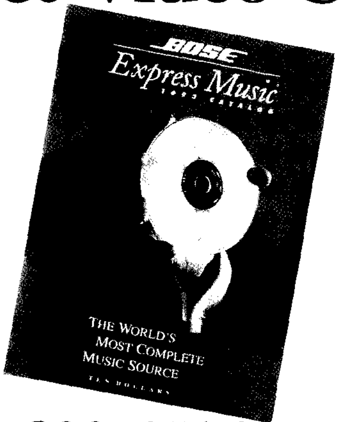

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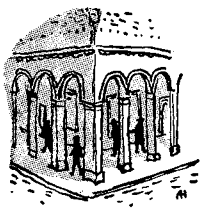
at.” With new capital, Arnelle & Hastie could hire people to take the firm into tax work, banking, commercial real estate, and public-bond issues. The firm also expanded its staff: it hired women, Native Americans, Asians, and Hispanics. It even hired white males; three are now partners.

One of the advantages that Arnelle & Hastie brings to its corporate clients is its members’ strengths as litigators. “Corporations realized that minority firms, by their very nature, have been more involved in trial work,” Hastie says. “The nature of the minority practice is much closer to the bone than your typical corporate-litigation practice—minority firms have real brass-knuckles, nose-to-nose, toe-to-toe experience in fighting it out.”

A quick wit and careful preparation will take a lawyer only so far. Litigators have to believe that they will win. Jesse Arnelle does. He says, “In the days when I was in solo practice, I was taking on cases that other people wouldn’t take on, because of the high possibility of losing in a very public way. I was always very competitive, and I totally believe that I have the edge.”

Hickman also loves playing legal gladiator in the courtroom. “It sounds very cocky, and it is cocky,” he says. “There aren’t twelve people in this world that I cannot convince, if I believe I’m representing the right.”

Hickman and Hastie are from far more comfortable childhood homes than Arnelle. Hastie’s father was a lawyer, the dean of the law school at Howard University, and a federal appellate court judge in Philadelphia. Hickman comes from a long line of doctors and educators. As a young public defender with the Roxbury Defenders Committee, an alternative public-defense organization in Boston, he was as far out of place in the lumpen, lower-class surroundings of the criminal world as any Wonder Bread white boy from the suburbs. He likes to tell how he and another black colleague, hot to interview a witness called Blue Hill Bobby, dressed themselves up in “pimp clothes”—broad-brimmed hats, multicolored shirts, and platform shoes—in order to blend in at the rendezvous site, a dive called the Lamp Lighter Lounge. Thus attired, they got into Hickman’s Volvo and drove to the bar. “It was just like a scene out of the Old West,” he says. “The music stopped. They were just staring at us. My friend, attempting a menacing voice, said, ‘We’re here to see Blue Hill Bobby.’ Somebody pulled out the biggest gun I’ve ever seen in my life, just this huge gun. I said, ‘Let’s go home.’ ”



Hickman learned his craft by watching the best in the business. “I used to sit and watch trial lawyers practice their art,” he says. “I went to the Sirhan Sirhan trial. I got into a staring contest with Charles Manson. He was known to stare at people with that evil look of his. I say to this day that he blinked. I really noticed the theatre of the courtroom.”

Whatever their background, most of the lawyers at Arnelle & Hastie cut their professional teeth in the area of public-interest and civil-rights law—particularly employment law. These are areas in which corporations need all the help they can get, and many are finding that the best help comes from old adversaries. “I was involved in an action—a shareholders’ protest—against Levi Strauss, and Levi Strauss later became my first corporate client,” Hastie says.

Levi Strauss, probably the world’s largest clothing manufacturer, with annual sales estimated at around 5.6 billion dollars, is enthusiastic about Arnelle & Hastie, according to Joann M. Russell, the corporation’s associate general counsel. “The quality of the work and the price are extremely competitive, and it’s very much a full-service firm,” she says.

Full service and low overhead. Hastie says that Arnelle & Hastie has sometimes undercut the competition by more than twenty per cent. Their timing has proved fortunate. Not long after the firm was founded, American corporations began to rebel against the hundreds of millions of dollars the big law firms were charging. Guy Rounsaville, Jr., an executive vice-president and the chief counsel of Wells Fargo Bank, which is an Arnelle & Hastie client, remarks, “No longer can an in-house lawyer say to his boss or her boss that the law is a mystery, and that you can’t really question why it costs so much. That doesn’t pass muster anymore. You have to have a reason for the costs.” To keep costs low, Arnelle & Hastie lawyers practice every economy, from using discount airplane tickets to transmitting information by computer when the spare-no-expense firms might use Federal Express. “We are a smaller creature with a large appetite,” Hastie says happily.

Beyond quality and price, diversity itself has its advantages. “Let’s face it—corporate America does get sued,” Hastie says. “Corporations do get sued sometimes in cities where there are significant minority populations, and who are the lawyers who are going before those juries? Buttoned-down, Ivy-tied lawyers who are from a different planet as far as the jury is concerned, or other, admittedly buttoned-down, Ivy-tied lawyers who at least have a little color in their faces? It’s a small difference, but sometimes it works.”

“We live in a diversified community and I don’t want to be represented by an all-white-male law firm,” Rounsaville, of Wells Fargo, says. “I want something that represents me and my customers.”

Ironically, Arnelle & Hastie’s greatest challenge may lie in hanging on to its cultural diversity. “It’s not always easy to do that, let me tell you,” Hastie says. “There is a tremendous and fierce competition for minority graduates. Our salaries are not competitive. We provide a unique experience, though: we are a minority-owned and a minority-run firm.”

All doors may not yet be open, the playing field may not be completely level, but Arnelle sees the offers of board membership that he now receives as a measure of the firm’s real importance and of the changes that the country has seen. “When I was asked to join the Wells Fargo Bank board, I felt that a lot of things had come full circle in my lifetime,” he says. “I thought about my mother, who came from Jamaica as an illegal alien, and my dad, who grew up in rural Georgia. Then I thought about Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King. So many things, so many pieces—almost disparate pieces—and yet they fitted together and made so much happen in my lifetime, and I have the benefit of what they did. I remember walking into the boardroom thinking about that, and feeling real pride: God! I’ve got to understand and appreciate this moment, because it is the culmination of a lot of things. I felt proud of myself because I knew where the hell I’d come from. I felt proud of having received the benefits of our history.” ♦

We can think of life as a *series of moments.*

The sum of which is our *journey.*

Thoughts and events. Times and places.

All connected.

All related.

So everything we do *today* affects today.

And *next* Wednesday.

And *next* year.

And all the years *to come.*

In the beginning.

We become who we are going to be *very early on.*

Characteristics appear. Patterns emerge. Habits form, *good and bad.*

Given that the adult body is 55 to 65% water, one of the most important habits we ever *learn* is to practice proper hydration — drinking enough water to *sustain life.*

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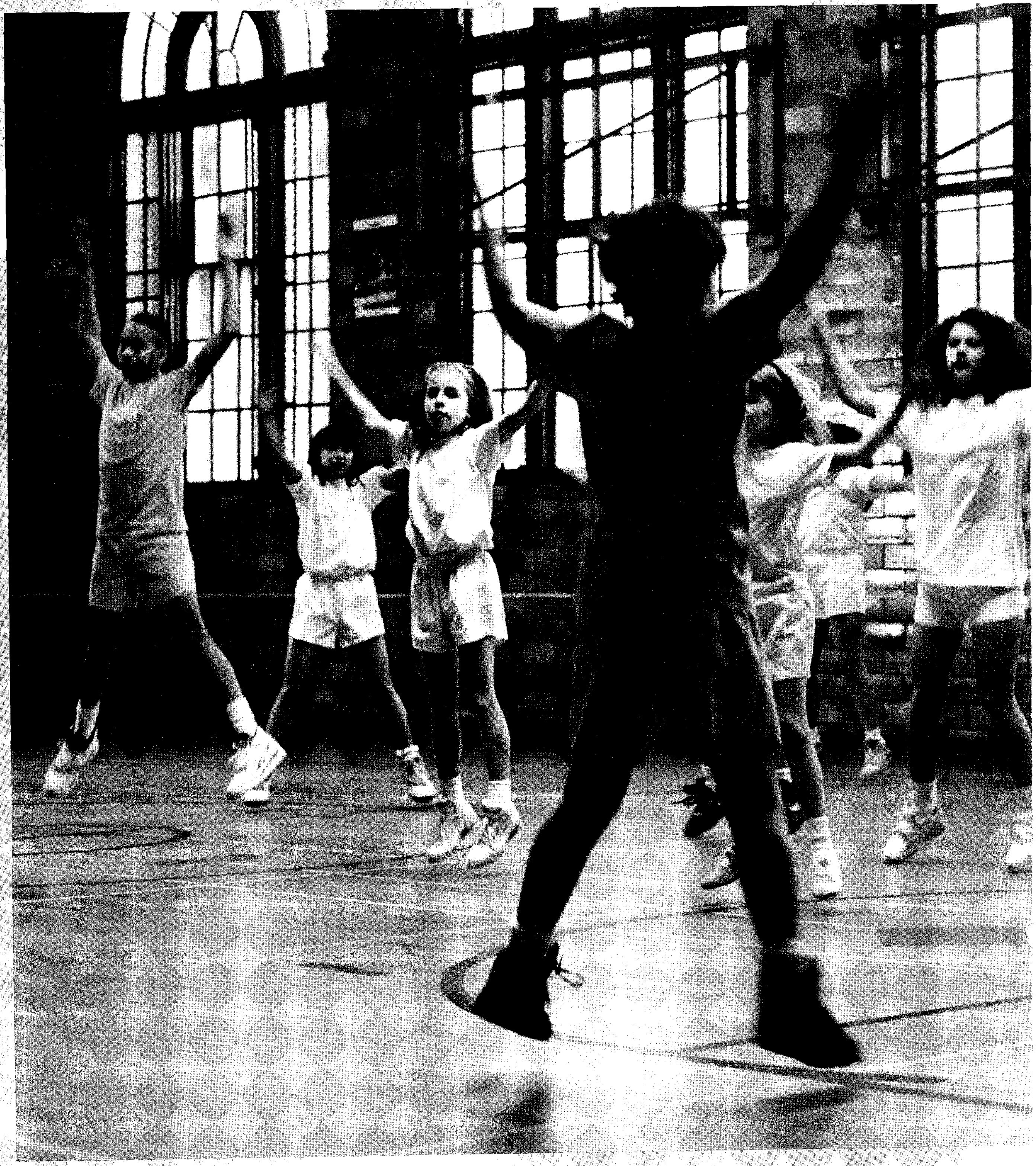
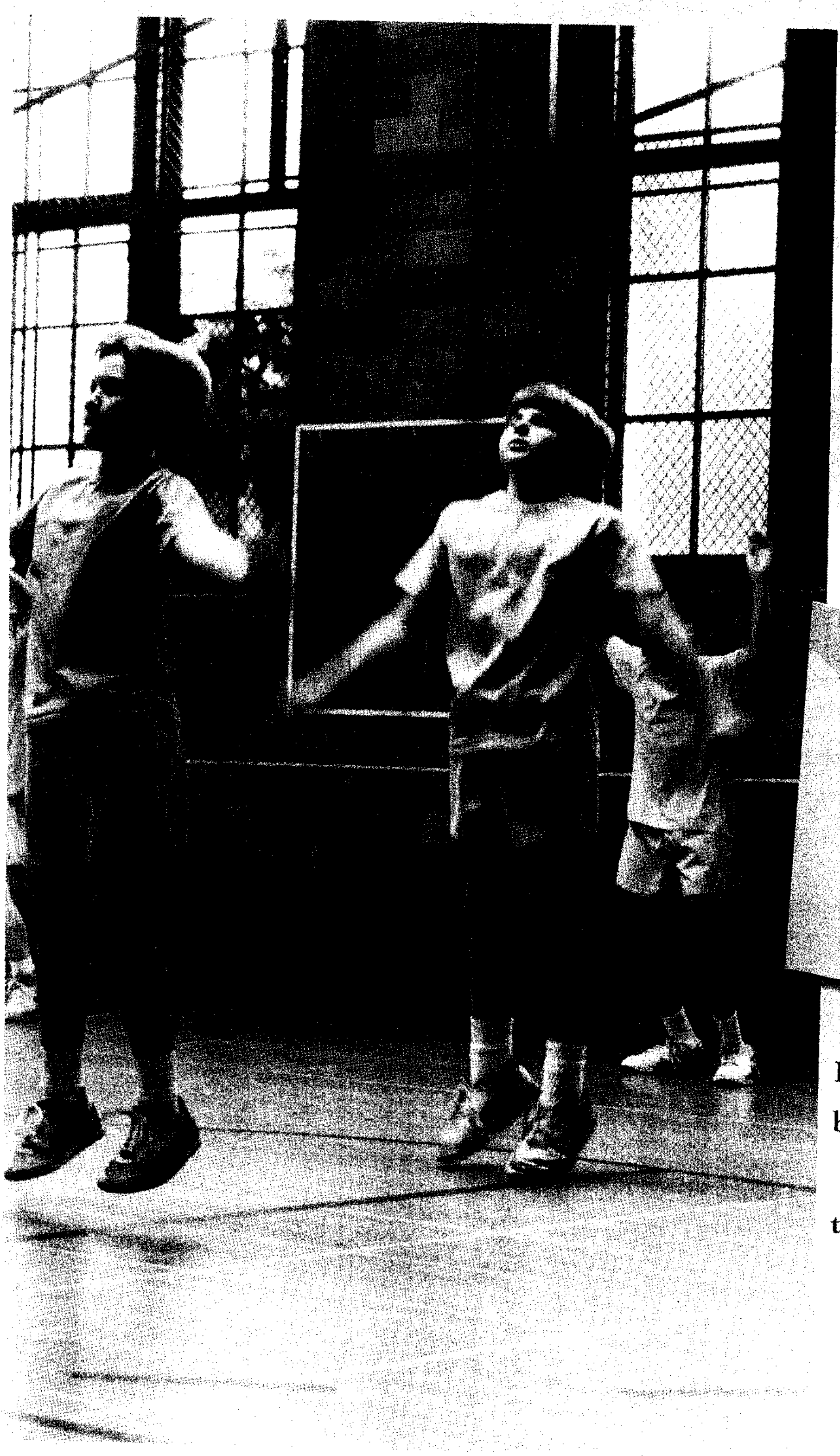
But which water?

Evian® emerges from its source in the Alps, made pure *by the mountains,* not by man. To help replenish what your body uses and loses day after day.

Every day.

The growing season.





"He grew 6 *inches* in 6 months."

"She's already taller *than all the boys* in the class."

"His voice changed *overnight*."

Growing up is *hard work*. So it's even more important now to give a body what it needs to get the job done.

Like the air we breathe, water is one of the essential elements our bodies use *to make the journey to adulthood.*

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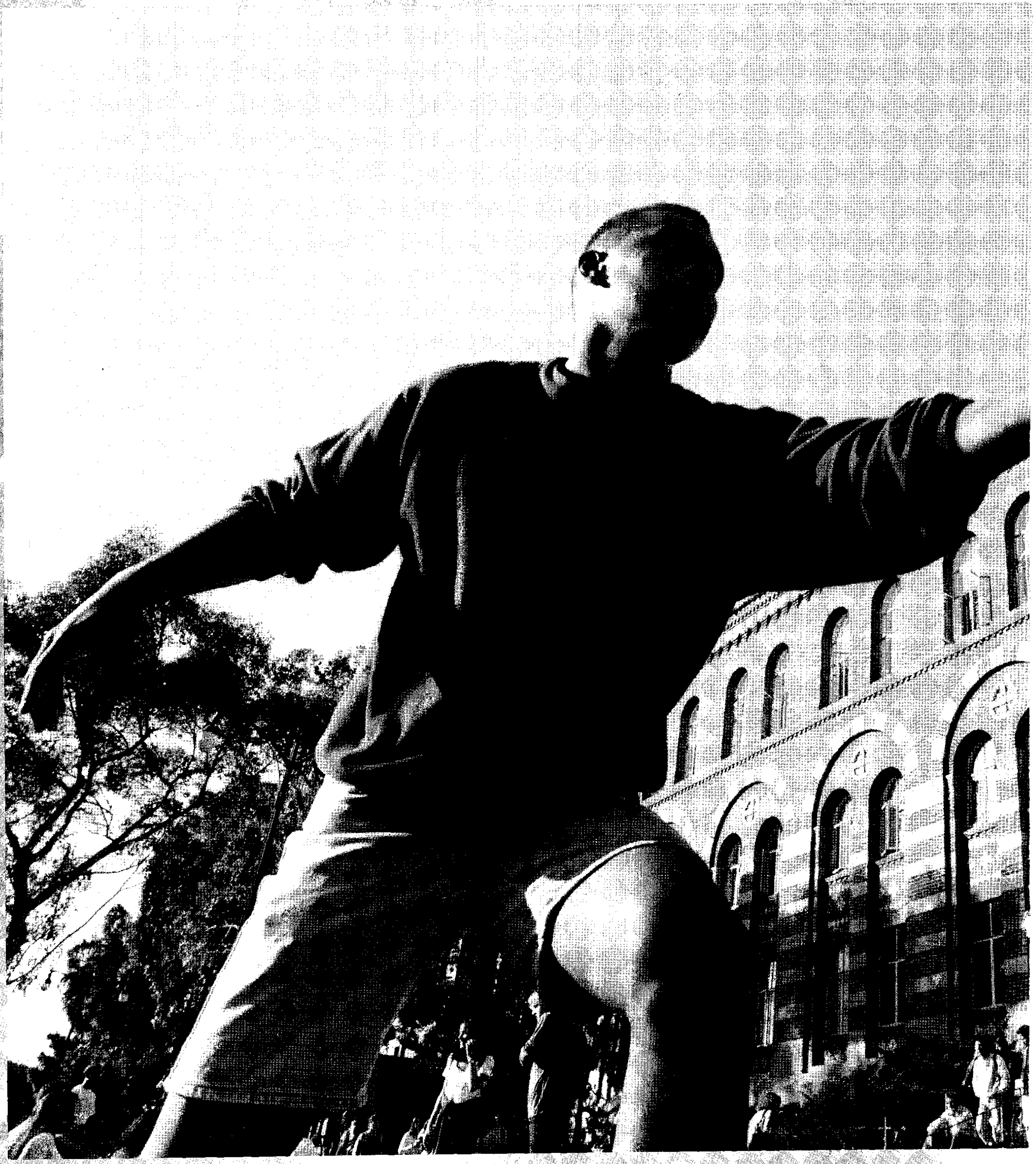
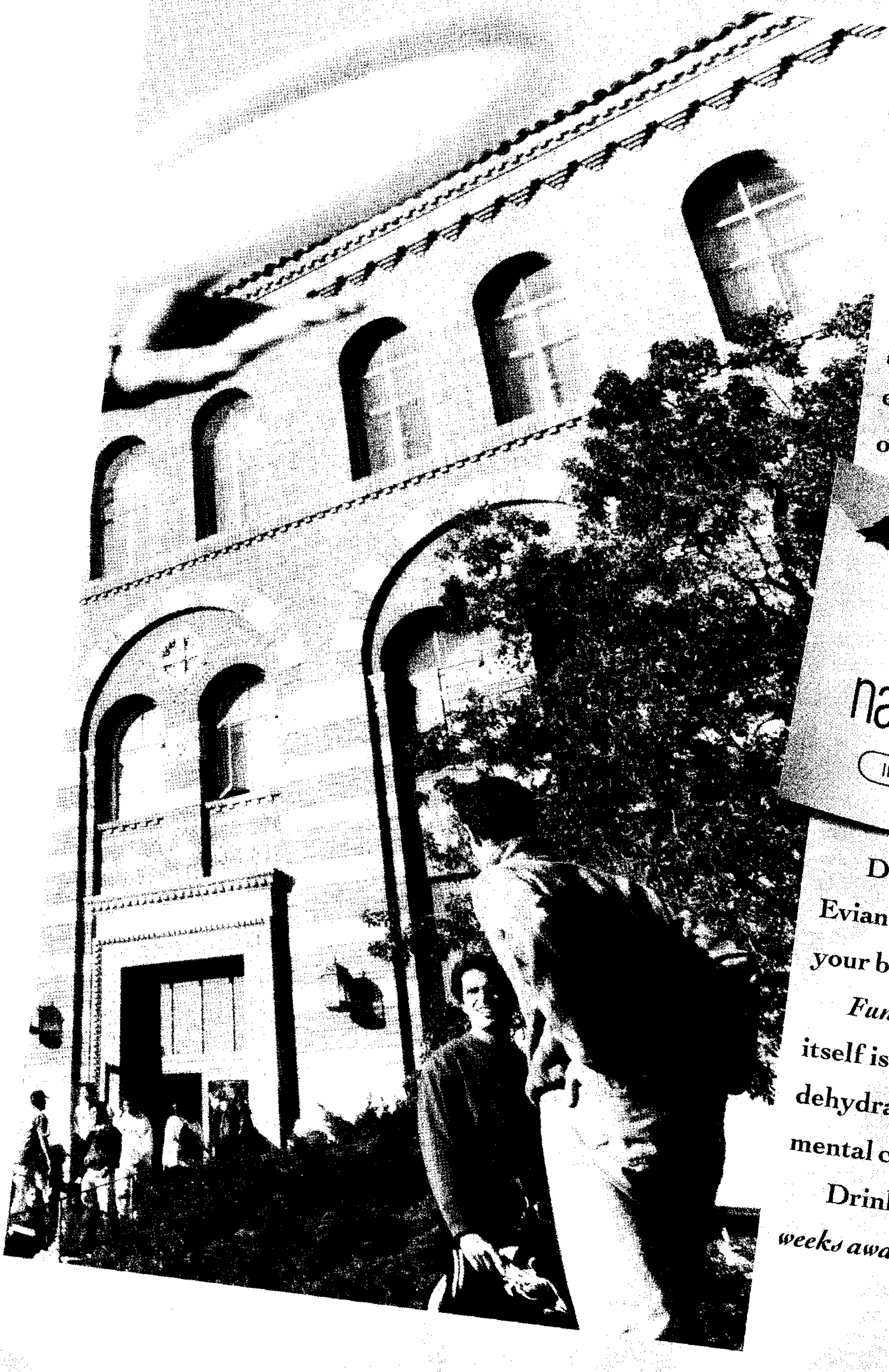
Another journey, deep within the French Alps, gives Evian its *unique* balance of minerals.

A journey that, *coincidentally*, also takes around 15 years.

Welcome to the next phase of your life.
Here are the prerequisites.





It may be the best time of your life, but it's also a time when life starts making *big-time* demands on you.

Not to sound like *a voice of reason* or anything, but keep in mind: it may be getting *harder* and *harder* to make sure you eat right. Or to make sure you get to bed on time. *Or to bed at all.*

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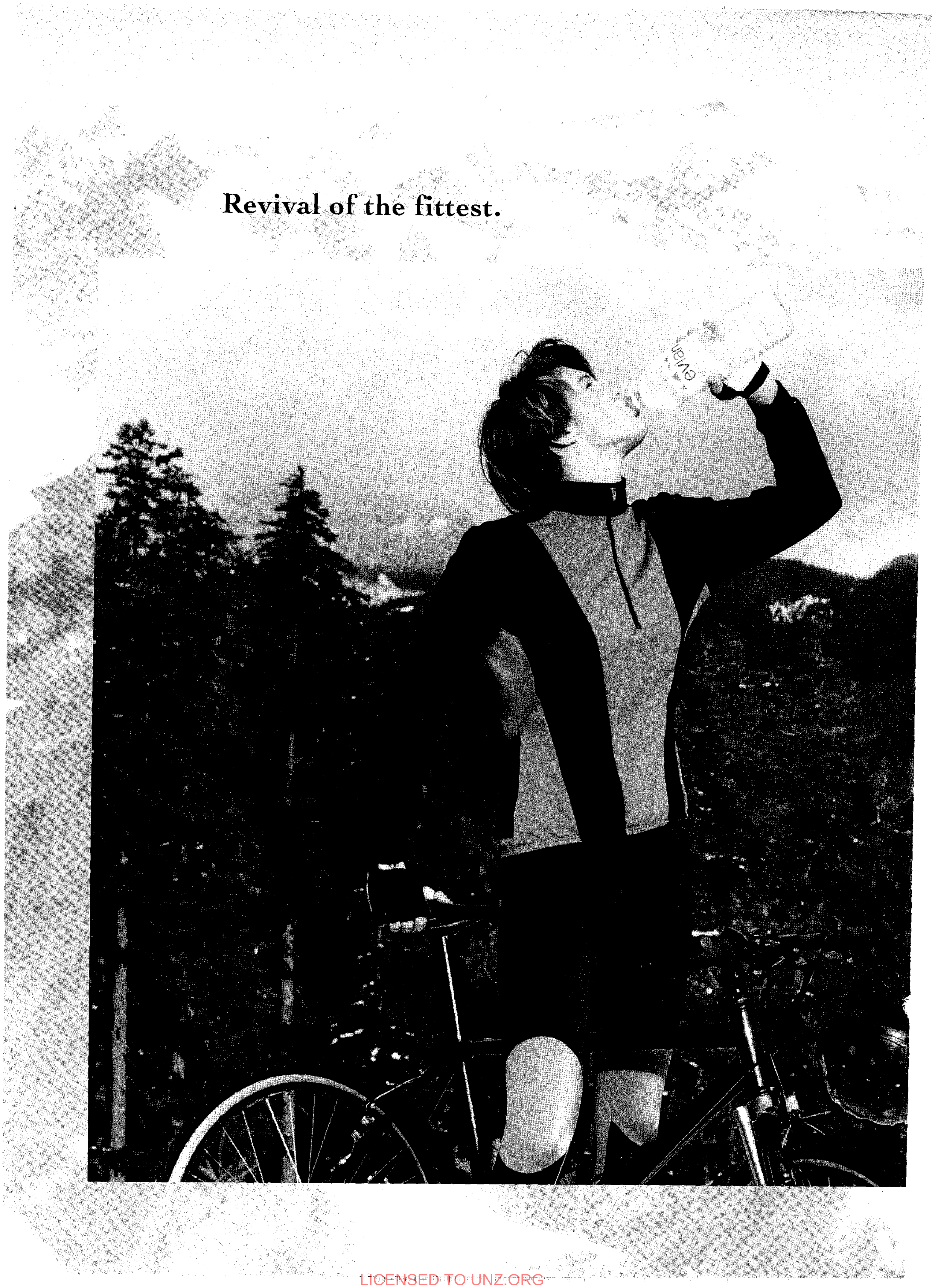
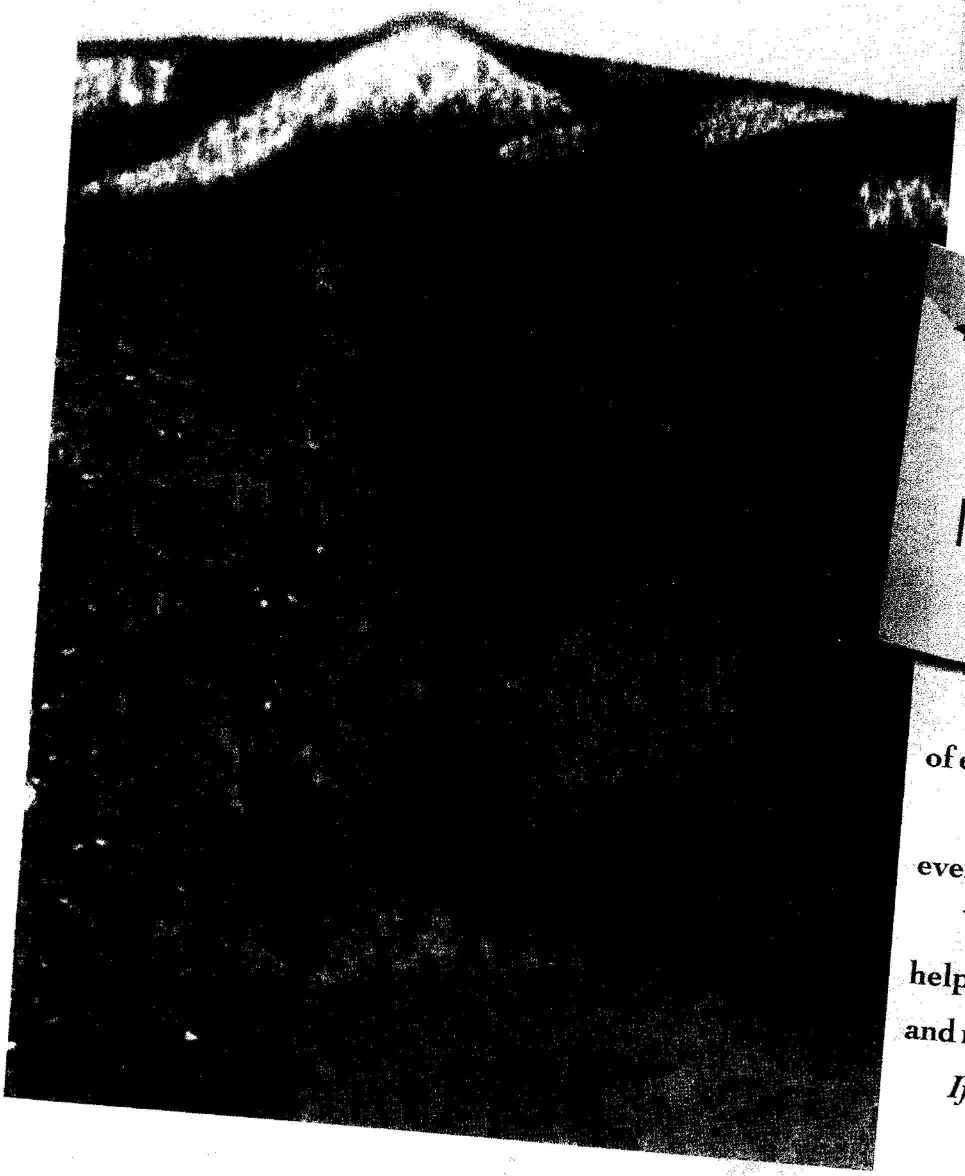
Drinking *eight 8-ounce glasses* of Evian every day is an easy way to treat your body right. And your mind.

Fun Fact: three-quarters of the brain itself is water. And the *mere onset* of dehydration can result in diminished mental capacity.

Drink your Evian. Finals are only *weeks away*.



Revival of the fittest.
evian



Proper hydration is *essential* for peak performance.

But if you wait for your body's *thirst mechanism* to tell you when and how much extra water you should drink, *you risk dehydration.*

A fairly *reliable solution?*

First, drink an 8-ounce glass of water 30 minutes before exercising. And once *again* 15 minutes before exercising.

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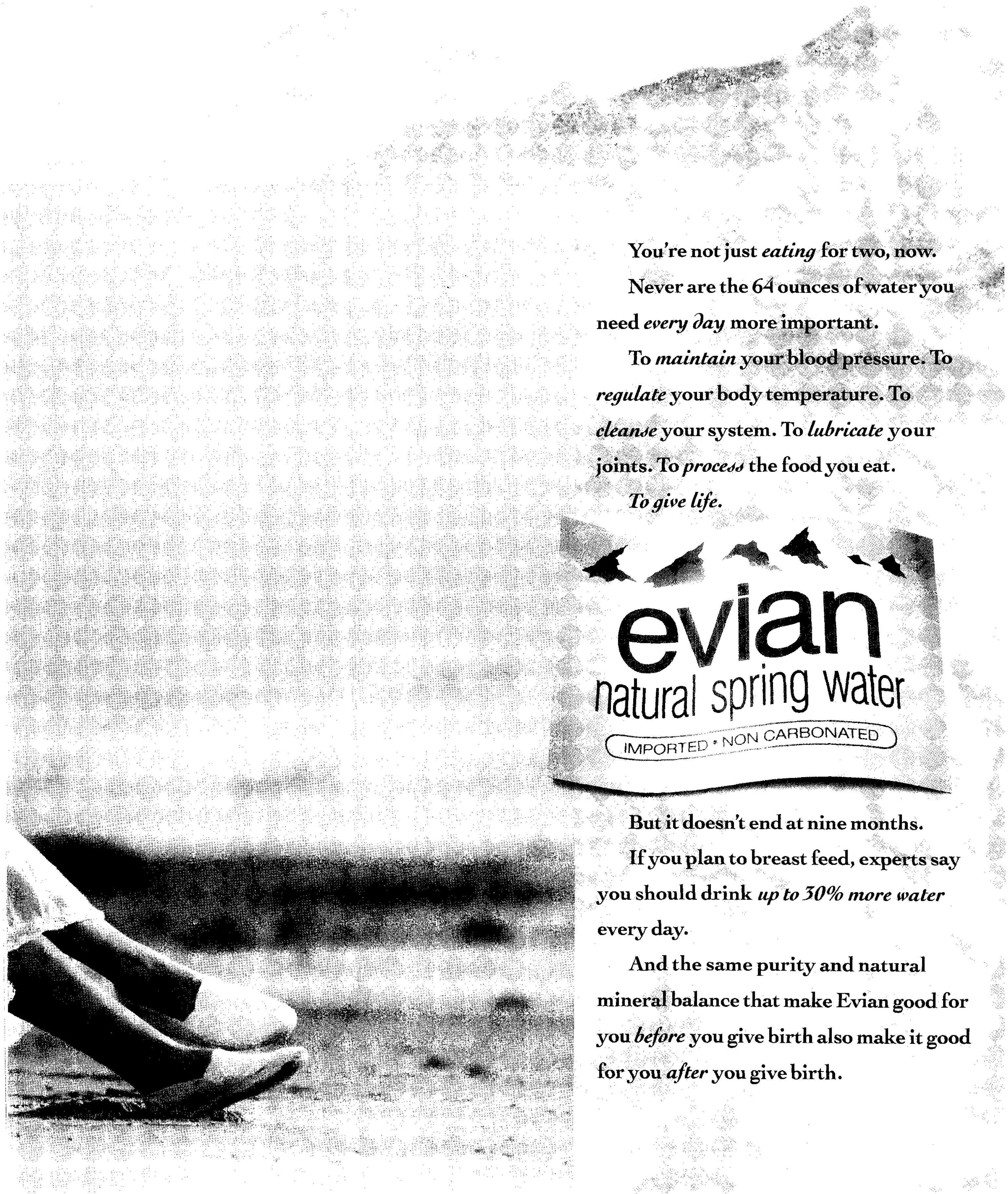
And once *again* for every 20 minutes of exercise.

And *(this is important)* keep drinking even after you stop exercising.

While you're at it, you'll also be helping to *replenish* some of the calcium and magnesium you lose.

If those glasses are filled with Evian.

Mommy, can I have a drink of water?
vian



You're not just *eating* for two, now.

Never are the 64 ounces of water you need *every day* more important.

To *maintain* your blood pressure. To *regulate* your body temperature. To *cleanse* your system. To *lubricate* your joints. To *process* the food you eat.

To give life.

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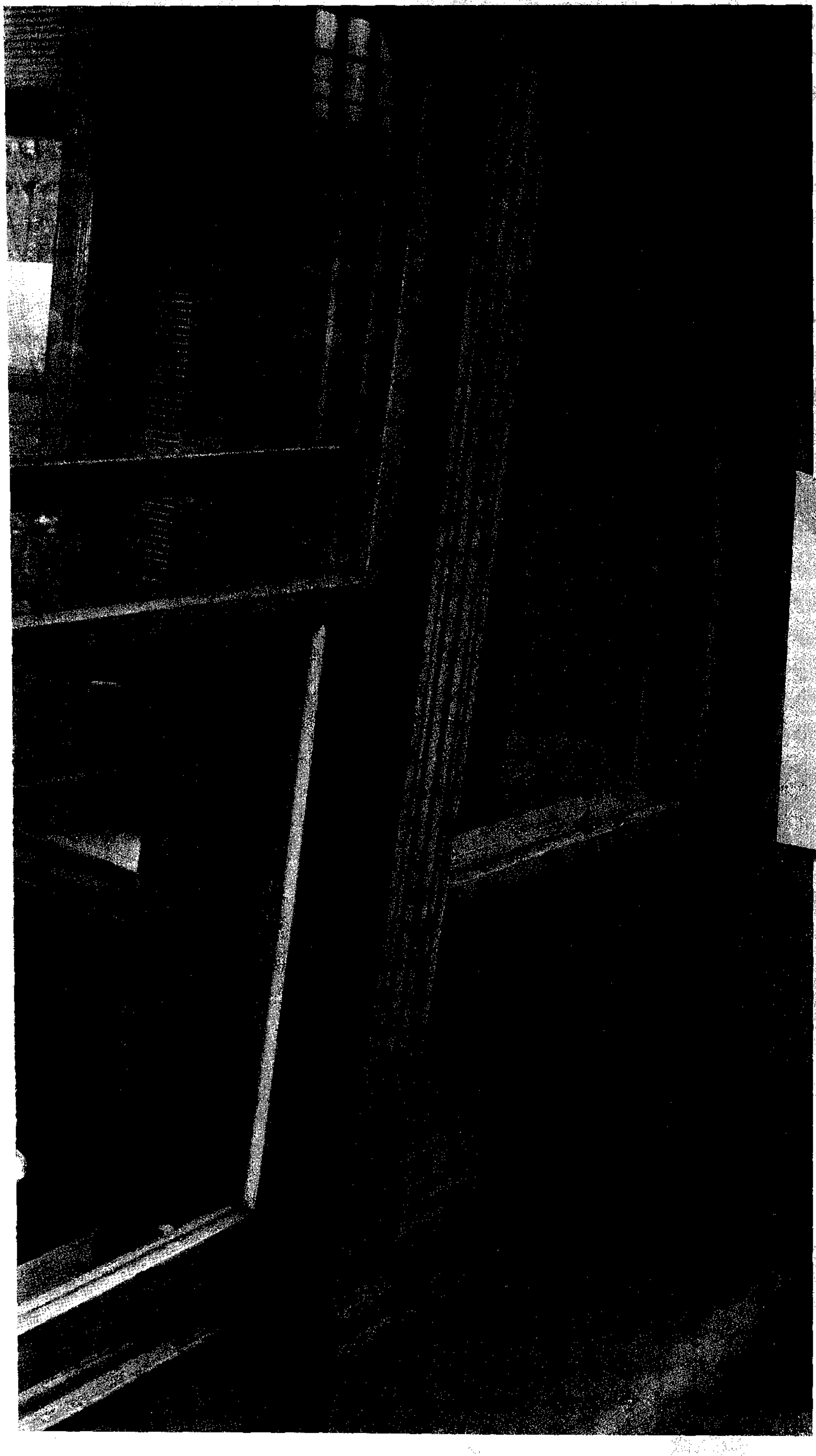
But it doesn't end at nine months.

If you plan to breast feed, experts say you should drink *up to 30% more water* every day.

And the same purity and natural mineral balance that make Evian good for you *before* you give birth also make it good for you *after* you give birth.

Work takes a lot out of you.
You just don't know how much.



Beyond the obvious realities of life in the nineties *(e.g., stress, global competition, downsizing, the cost of health care, etc.)* work may be sacking your system more than you think.

Just *being* at work. Sitting down. Breathing. Thinking. You're losing water. *Quarts and quarts of it.*

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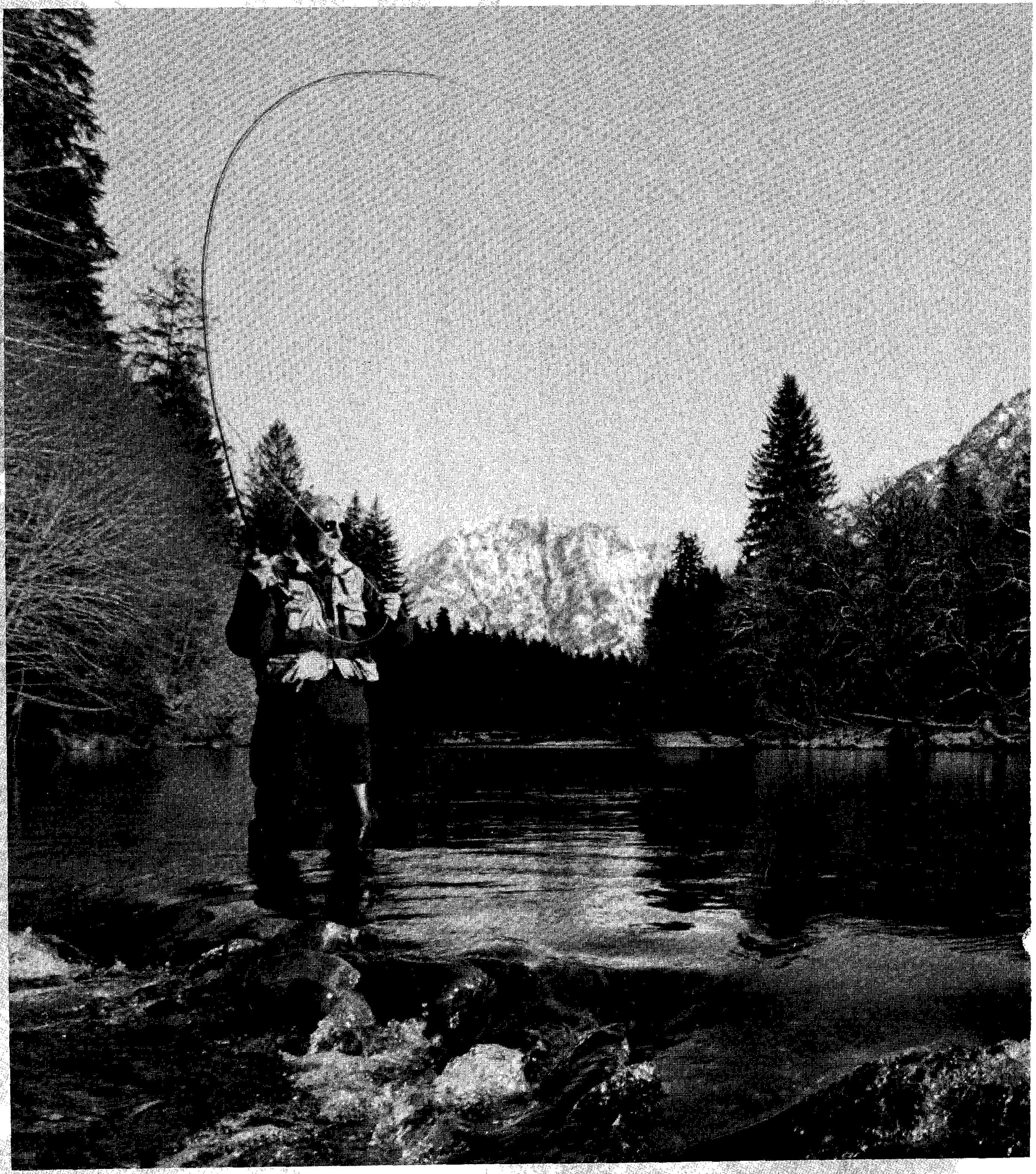
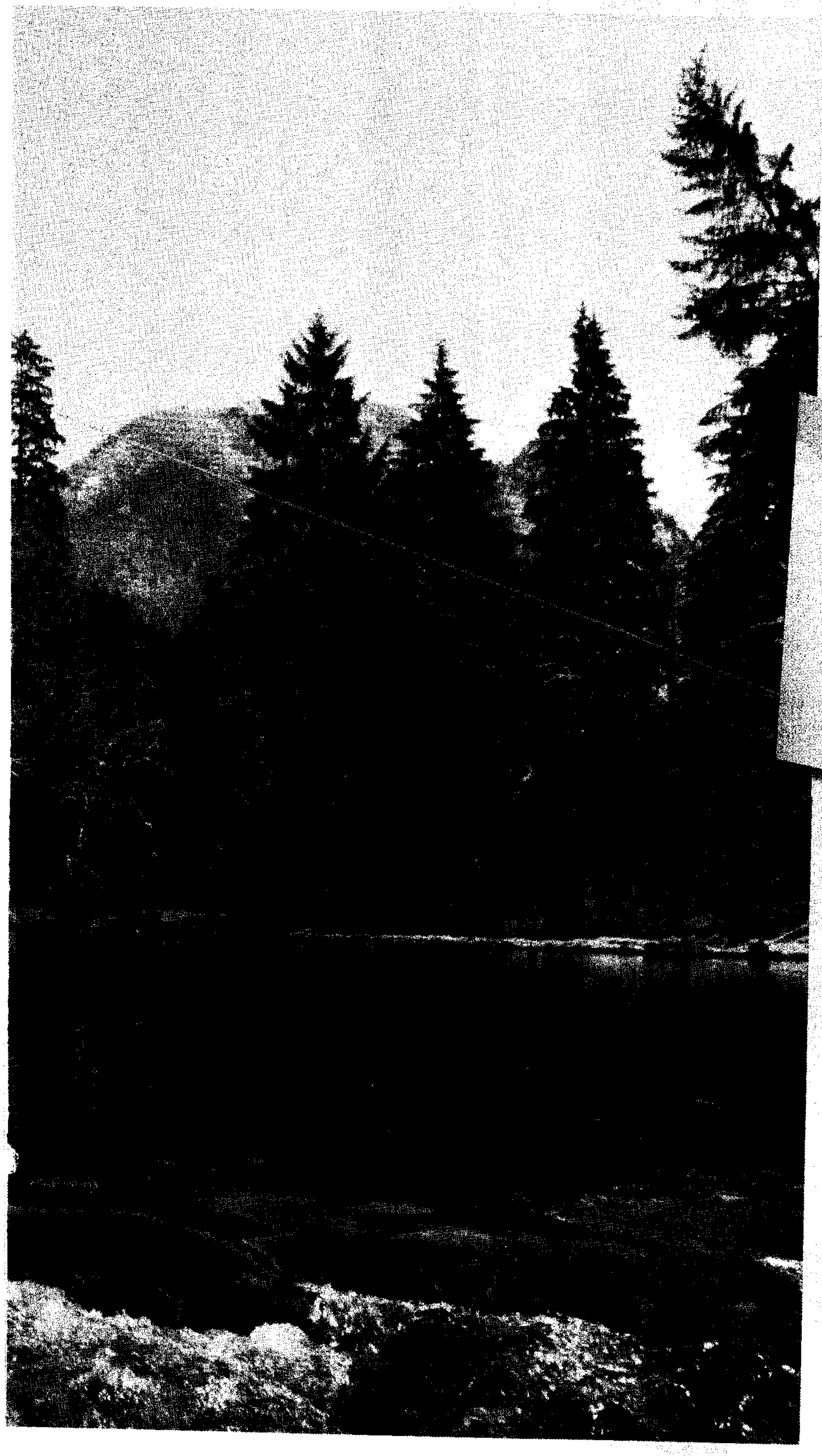
To stay healthy now and *in the future,* replacing that water has to become as *inevitable* as losing it.

Taking a bottle of Evian to work with you *every day* can help *undo* what work does to your body Monday through Friday.

And sometimes on *weekends.*

Why should anything change now?





If there were a fountain of youth *(and there isn't)* what would be in it?

Lots of *water.*

Because drinking enough water is the easiest, most important way to help your body give you a lifetime of *reliable service.*

evian

natural spring water

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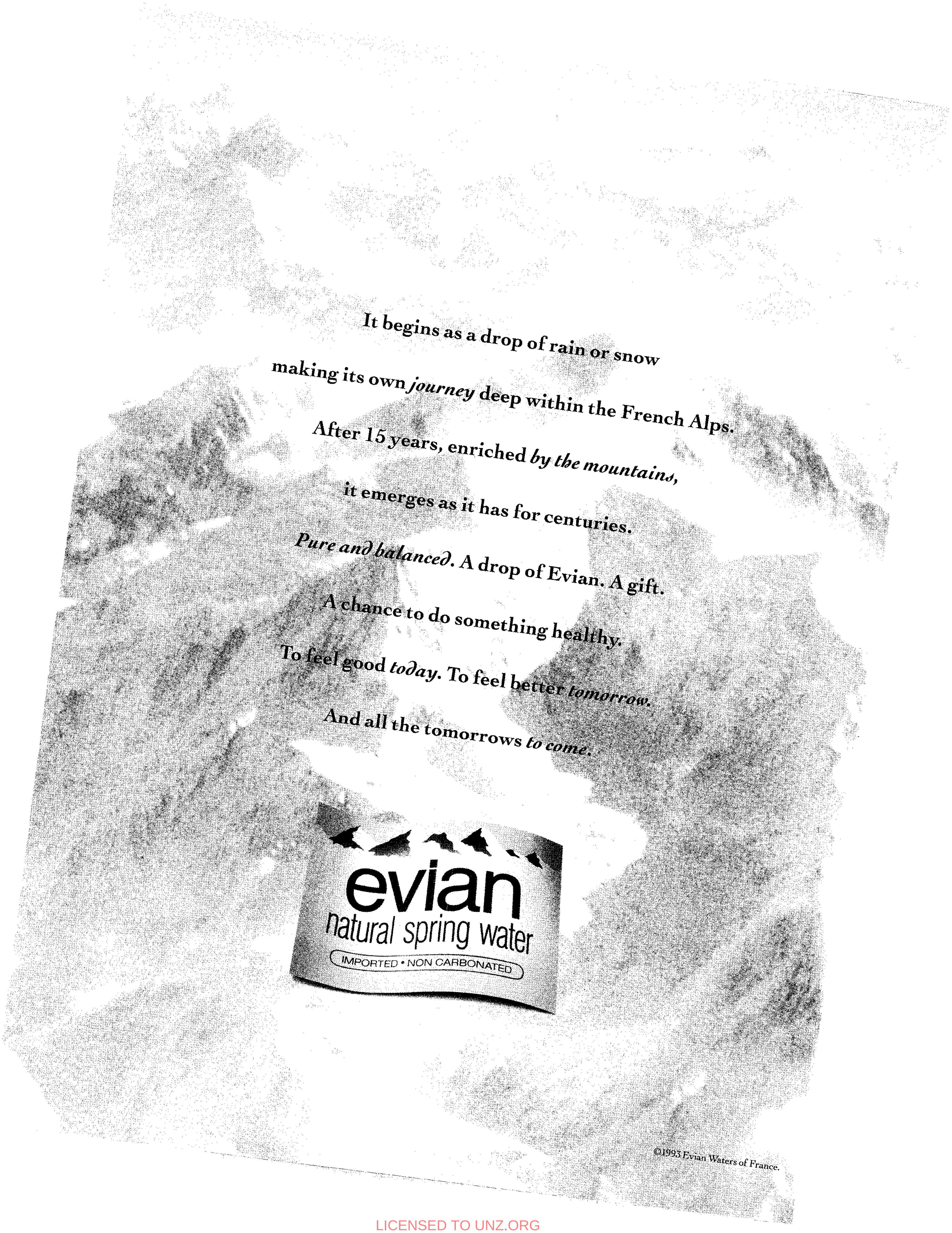
And *"how old are you?"* is completely missing the point.

Your heart, your kidneys, your skin, *your mind,* they all need proper hydration every day of your life. *They* don't care whether you're *9 or 90.*

They're happy if they get their *eight glasses* of Evian every day.

And if *they* feel young and healthy, *you* feel young and healthy.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It begins as a drop of rain or snow
making its own *journey* deep within the French Alps.
After 15 years, enriched *by the mountains*,
it emerges as it has for centuries.
Pure and balanced. A drop of Evian. A gift.
A chance to do something healthy.
To feel good *today*. To feel better *tomorrow*.
And all the tomorrows *to come*.

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A NEUROLOGIST'S NOTEBOOK

TO SEE AND NOT SEE

What happens when an adult who has been blind since childhood suddenly has his vision restored? The experience of Virgil, a fifty-year-old Oklahoman who regained his sight after forty-five years, raises questions about perception that have haunted philosophers and scientists for centuries.

BY OLIVER SACKS

EARLY in October of 1991, I got a phone call from a retired minister in the Midwest, who told me about his daughter's fiancé, a fifty-year-old man named Virgil, who had been virtually blind since early childhood. He had thick cataracts, and was also said to have retinitis pigmentosa, a hereditary condition that slowly but implacably eats away at the retinas. But his fiancée, Amy, who required regular eye checks herself, because of diabetes, had recently taken him to see her own ophthalmologist, Dr. Scott Hamlin, and he had given them new hope. Dr. Hamlin, listening carefully to the history, was not so sure that Virgil had retinitis pigmentosa. It was difficult to be certain at this stage, because the retinas could no longer be seen beneath the thick cataracts, but Virgil could still see light and dark, the direction from which light came, and the shadow of a hand moving in front of his eyes, so obviously there was not a total destruction of the retina. And cataract extraction was a relatively simple procedure, done under local anesthesia, with very little surgical risk. There was nothing to lose—and there might be much to gain. Amy and Virgil would be getting married soon—wouldn't it be fantastic if he could see? If, after nearly a lifetime of blindness, his first vision could be his bride, the wedding, the minister, the church!

Dr. Hamlin had agreed to operate, and the cataract on Virgil's right eye had been removed a fortnight earlier, Amy's father informed me. And, miraculously, the operation had worked. Amy, who began keeping a journal the day after the operation—the day the bandages were removed—wrote in her initial entry: "Virgil can SEE! . . . Entire office in tears, first time Virgil has sight for forty years. . . . Virgil's family so excited, crying, can't believe it! . . . Miracle of sight restored incredible!" But the following day she remarked problems: "Trying to adjust to being sighted, tough to go from blindness to sighted. Has to think faster, not able to trust vision yet. . . . Like baby just learning to see, everything new, exciting, scary, unsure of what seeing means."

A neurologist's life is not systematic, like a scientist's, but it provides him with novel and unexpected situations, which can become windows, peepholes, into the intricacy of nature—an intricacy that one might not anticipate from the ordinary course of life. "Nature is nowhere accustomed more openly to display her secret mysteries," wrote Thomas Willis, in the seventeenth century, "than in cases where she shows traces of her workings apart from the beaten path." Certainly this phone call—about the restoration of vision in adulthood to a patient blind from early childhood—hinted of such a case. "In fact," writes the ophthalmologist Alberto Valvo, in "Sight Restoration after Long-Term Blindness" (1971), "the number of cases of this kind over the last ten centuries known to us is not more than twenty."

ODILON REDON, COURTESY OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO ©1993

What would vision be like in such a patient? Would it be "normal" from the moment vision was restored? This is what one might think at first. This is the commonsensical notion—that the eyes will be opened, the scales will fall from them, and (in the words of the New Testament) the blind man will "receive" sight.

But could it be that simple? Was not *experience* necessary to see? Did one not have to learn to see? I was not well acquainted with the literature on the subject, though I had read with fascination the great case history published in the *Quarterly Journal of Psychology* in 1963 by the psychologist Richard Gregory (with Jean G. Wallace), and I knew that such cases, hypothetical or real, had riveted the attention of philosophers an psychologists for hundreds of years. (There is a hint of it even in the Bible, in Mark's description of the miracle at Bethsaida; for here, at first, the blind man saw "men as trees, walking," and only subsequently was his eyesight fully restored.) The seventeenth-century philosopher William Molyneux, whose wife was blind, posed the following question to his friend John Locke: "Suppose a man born blind, and now adult, and taught by his touch to distinguish between a cube and a sphere [be] made to see: [could he now] by his sight, before he touched them . . . distinguish and tell which was the globe and which the cube?" Locke considers this in his "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (1690) and decides that the answer is no. In 1709, examining the problem in more detail, and the whole relation between sight and touch, in "A New Theory of Vision," George Berkeley concluded that there was no necessary connection between a tactile world and a sight world—that a connection between them could be established only on the basis of experience.

Barely twenty years elapsed before these considerations were put to the test—when, in 1728, an English surgeon named William Cheselden removed the cataracts from the eyes of a thirteen-year-old boy born blind. Despite his high intelligence and youth, the boy encountered profound difficulties with the simplest visual perceptions. He had no idea of distance. He had no idea of space or size. And he was bizarrely confused by drawings and paintings, by the *idea* of a two-dimensional representation of reality. As Berkeley had anticipated, he was able to make sense of what he saw only gradually, and insofar as he was able to connect visual experiences with tactile ones. It had been similar with many other patients in the two hundred and fifty years since Cheselden's operation: nearly all had experienced the most profound, Lockean confusion and bewilderment.

And yet, I was informed, as soon as the bandages were removed from Virgil's eye he saw his doctor and his fiancée, and laughed. Doubtless he saw *something*—but what did he see? What did "seeing" for this previously not-seeing man mean? What sort of world had he been launched into?

THE FRIENDLY CITY

Unless you put it away
he can never play with it again,
the marimba, and you know what that means.

Our city bemoans us, or does it
only seem to? Showers that come in shifts,
light poles guarded in air,
the dry cackle of trees in the Botanical Gardens?

Was it for this suburban marketplace
you wrote, and are writing still
in that wire-bound notebook of yours?
Things like: "Man cannot stand what he has become
but he loves to lap up his own vomit"?

In that case the city will probably stay around
for most of the day. It likes your sleeping sound,
not the bad silence of the others
who are even now clogging its approaches,
giving the place a bad name.

Oh if it was a name he wanted
why didn't somebody say something?
We could have found him one so easily,
like "Elector of Brandenburg,"
and the city could have seen its reflection
finally, a ducal palace, upended.

—JOHN ASHBERY

VIRGIL (nearly all the names in this account have been changed, and some identifying details have been disguised) was born on a small farm in Kentucky soon after the outbreak of the Second World War. He seemed normal enough as a baby, but (his mother thought) had poor eyesight even as a toddler, sometimes bumped into things, seemed not to see them. At the age of three, he became gravely ill with a triple illness—a meningitis or meningoencephalitis (inflammation of the brain and its membranes), polio, and cat-scratch fever. During this acute illness, he had convulsions, became virtually blind, paralyzed in the legs, partly paralyzed in his breathing, and, after ten days, fell into a coma. He remained in a coma for two weeks. When he emerged from it, he seemed, according to his mother, "a different person" and "sort of dull inside"; he showed a curious indolence, nonchalance, passivity, seemed nothing at all like the spunky, mischievous boy he had been.

The strength in his legs came back over the next year, and his chest grew stronger, though never, perhaps, entirely normal. His vision also recovered significantly—but his retinas were now gravely damaged. Whether the retinal damage was caused wholly by his acute illness or perhaps partly by a congenital retinal degeneration was never clear.

In Virgil's sixth year, cataracts began to develop in both eyes, and it was evident that he was becoming functionally blind. That same year, he was sent to a school for the blind, and there he eventually learned to read Braille and to become adept with the use of a cane. But he was not a star pupil; he was not as adventurous or aggressively independent as some blind people are. There was a striking passivity all through his time at school—as, indeed, there had been since his illness.

Yet Virgil graduated from the school and, when he was twenty, decided to leave Kentucky, to seek training, work, and a life of his own in a city in Oklahoma. He trained as a massage therapist, and soon found employment at a Y.M.C.A. He was obviously good at his job, and highly esteemed, and the Y was happy to keep him on its permanent staff and to provide a small house for him across the road, where he lived with a friend, also employed at the Y. Virgil had many clients—it is fascinating to hear the tactile detail with which he can describe them—and seemed to take a real pleasure and pride in his job. Thus, in his modest way, Virgil made a life: had a steady job and an identity, was self-supporting, had friends, read Braille papers and books (though less, with the years, as Talking Books came in). He had a passion for sports, especially baseball, and loved to listen to games on the radio. He had an encyclopedic knowledge of baseball games, players, scores, statistics. On a couple of occasions, he became involved with girlfriends, and would cross the city on public transport to meet them. He maintained a close tie with

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"Which came first, Mom, the Chicken McNugget or the Egg McMuffin?"

home, and particularly with his mother—he would get hampers of food regularly from the farm, and send hampers of laundry back and forth. Life was limited, but stable in its way.

Then, in 1991, he met Amy—or, rather, they met again, for they had known each other well twenty or more years before. Amy's background was different from Virgil's: she came from a cultivated middle-class family, had gone to college in New Hampshire, and had a degree in botany. She had worked at another Y in town, as a swimming coach, and had met Virgil at a cat show in 1968. They dated a bit—she was in her early twenties, he was a few years older—but then Amy decided to go back to graduate school in Arkansas, where she met her first husband, and she and Virgil fell out of contact. She ran her own plant nursery for a while, specializing in orchids, but had to give this up when she developed severe asthma. She and her first husband divorced after a few years, and she returned to Oklahoma. In 1988, out of the blue, Virgil called her, and, after three years of long phone calls between them, they finally met again, in 1991. "All of a sudden it was like twenty years were never there," Amy said.

Meeting again, at this point in their lives, both felt a certain desire for companionship. With Amy, perhaps, this took a more active form. She saw Virgil stuck (as she perceived it) in a vegetative, dull life: going over to the Y, doing his massages; going back home, where, increasingly, he listened to ballgames on the radio; going out and meeting people less and less each year. Restoring his sight, she must have felt, would, like marriage, stir him from his indolent bachelor existence and provide them both with a new life.

But Virgil was passive here as in so much else. He had been sent to half a dozen specialists over the years, and they had been unanimous in declining to operate, feeling that in all probability he had no useful retinal function; and Virgil seemed to accept this with equanimity. But Amy disagreed. With Virgil being blind already, she said, there was nothing to lose, and there was a real possibility, remote but almost too exciting to contemplate, that he might actually get reasonable sight back and, after forty-five years, see again. And so Amy pushed for the surgery. Virgil's mother, fearing disturbance, was strongly against it. ("He is fine as he is," she said.) Virgil himself showed no preference in the matter; he seemed happy to go along with whatever they decided.

Finally, in mid-September, the day of surgery came. Virgil's right eye had its cataract removed, and a new lens implant was inserted; then the eye was bandaged, as is customary, for twenty-four hours of recovery. The following day, the bandage was removed, and Virgil's eye was finally exposed, without cover, to the world. The moment of truth had finally come.

Or had it? The truth of the matter (as I pieced it together later), if less "miraculous" than Amy's journal suggested, was infinitely stranger. The dramatic moment stayed vacant, grew longer, sagged. No cry ("I can see!") burst from Virgil's lips. He seemed to be staring blankly, bewildered, without focussing, at the surgeon, who stood before him, still holding the bandages. Only when the surgeon spoke—saying "Well?"—did a look of recognition cross Virgil's face.

Virgil told me later that in this first moment he had no idea what he was seeing. There was light, there was movement, there was color, all mixed up, all meaningless, a blur. Then out of the blur came a voice that said, "Well?" Then, and only then, he said, did he finally realize that this chaos of light and shadow was a face—and, indeed, the face of his surgeon.

His experience was virtually identical to that of Gregory's patient, S.B.:

> When the bandages were removed . . . he heard a voice coming from in front of him and to one side: he turned to the source of the sound, and saw a "blur." He realized that this must be a face. . . . He seemed to think that he would not have known that this was a face if he had not previously heard the voice and known that voices came from faces.

The rest of us, born sighted, can scarcely imagine such confusion. For we, born with a full complement of senses, and correlating these, one with the other, create a sight world from the start, a world of visual objects and concepts and meanings. When we open our eyes each morning, it is upon a world we have spent a lifetime *learning* to see. We are not given the world: we make our world through incessant experience, categorization, memory, reconnection. But when Virgil opened his eye, after being blind for forty-five years—having had little more than an infant's visual experience, and this long forgotten—there were no visual memories to support a perception, there was no world of experience and meaning awaiting him. He saw, but what he saw had no coherence. His retina and optic nerve were active, transmitting impulses, but his brain could make no sense of them; he was, as neurologists say, agnosic.

Everyone, Virgil included, expected something much simpler. A man opens

AUTOMATED TELLER
DO YOU WISH TO CONDUCT THE REST OF YOUR LIFE IN:
ENGLISH
SPANISH
Victoria Roberts

his eyes, light enters, and falls on the retina: he sees. It is as simple as that, we imagine. And the surgeon's own experience, like that of most ophthalmologists, had been with the removal of cataracts from patients who had almost always lost their sight late in life—and such patients do indeed, if the surgery is successful, have a virtually immediate recovery of normal vision, for they have in no sense lost their ability to see. And so, though there had been a careful surgical discussion of the operation and of possible postsurgical complications, there was little discussion or preparation for the neurological and psychological difficulties that Virgil might encounter.

With the cataract out, Virgil was able to see colors and movements, to see (but not identify) large objects and shapes, and, astonishingly, to *read* some letters on the third line of the standard Snellen eye chart—the line corresponding to a visual acuity of about 20/100, or a little better. But though his best vision was a respectable 20/80, he lacked a coherent visual field, because his central vision was poor, and it was almost impossible for the eye to fixate on targets; it kept losing them, making random searching movements, finding them, then losing them again. It was evident that the central, or macular, part of the retina, which is specialized for high acuity and fixation, was scarcely functioning, and that it was only the surrounding *para*macular area which was making possible such vision as he had. The retina itself presented a moth-eaten or piebald appearance, with areas of increased and decreased pigmentation—islets of intact or relatively intact retina alternating with areas of atrophy. The macula was degenerated and pale, and the blood vessels of the entire retina appeared narrowed.

Examination, I was told, suggested the scars or residues of old disease but no current or active disease process; and, this being so, Virgil's vision, such as it was, could be stable for the rest of his life. It could be hoped, moreover (since the worse eye had been operated on first), that the left eye, which was to be operated upon in a few weeks' time, might have considerably more functional retina than the right.

I had not been able to go to Oklahoma straightaway—my impulse was to take the next plane after that initial phone call—but had kept myself informed of Virgil's progress over the ensuing weeks by speaking with Amy, with Virgil's mother, and, of course, with Virgil himself. I also spoke at length with Dr. Hamlin and with Richard Gregory, in England—to discuss what sort of test materials I should bring, for I myself had never seen such a case, nor did I know anyone (apart from Gregory) who had. I gathered together some materials—solid objects, pictures, cartoons, illusions, videotapes, and special perceptual tests designed by a physiologist colleague, Ralph Siegel; I phoned an ophthalmologist friend, Robert Wasserman (we had previously worked together on the case of a color-blind painter), and we started to plan a visit. It was important, we felt, not just to test Virgil but to see how he managed in real life, inside his house, outside, in natural settings and social situations; crucial, too, that we see him as a person, bringing his own life history—his particular dispositions and needs and expectations—to this critical passage; that we meet his fiancée, who had so urged the operation, and with whom his life was now so intimately mingled; that we look not merely at his eyes and perceptual powers but at the whole tenor and pattern of his life.

Virgil and Amy—now newlyweds—greeted us at the exit barrier in the airport. He was of medium height, but exceedingly fat; he moved slowly and tended to cough and puff with the slightest exertion. He was not, it was evident, an entirely well man. His eyes roved to and fro, in searching movements, and when Amy introduced Bob and me he did not seem to see us straightaway—he looked toward us but not quite at us. I had the impression, momentary but strong, that Virgil did not really look at our faces, though he smiled and laughed and listened minutely.

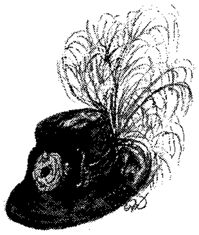
I was reminded of what Gregory had observed of his patient S.B.—that "he did not find faces 'easy' objects," and that "he did not look at a speaker's face, and made nothing of facial expressions." Virgil's behavior was certainly not that of a sighted man, but it wasn't that of a blind man, either. It was, rather, the behavior of one *mentally* blind, or agnosic—able to see but not to decipher what he was seeing. He reminded me of an agnosic patient of mine, Dr. P. (the man who mistook his wife for a hat), who, instead of looking at me, taking me in, in the normal way, made sudden strange fixations—on my nose, on my right ear, down to my chin, up to my right eye—not seeing my face as a whole.

We walked out through the crowded airport, Amy holding Virgil's arm, guiding him, and out to the lot where they had parked their car. Virgil was fond of cars, and one of his first pleasures after surgery (as with S.B.) had been to watch them through the window of his house, to enjoy their motions, and spot their colors and shapes—their colors, especially. He was sometimes bewildered by shapes. "What cars do you see?" I asked him as we walked through the lot. He pointed to all the cars we passed. "That's a blue one, that's red—wow, that's a big one!" Some of the shapes he found very surprising. "Look at that one!" he exclaimed once. "I have to look down!" And, bending, he felt it—it was a slinky, streamlined V-12 Jaguar—and confirmed its low profile. But it was only the colors and general profiles he was getting; he would have walked past his own car had Amy not been with him. And Bob and I were struck by the fact that Virgil would look, would attend visually, only if one asked him to or pointed something out—not spontaneously. His sight might be largely restored, but seeing, looking, it was clear, was far from natural to him; he still had many of the habits, the behaviors, of a blind man.

The drive from the airport to their house was a long one; it took us through the heart of town, and it gave us an opportunity to talk to Virgil and Amy, and to observe Virgil's reactions to his new vision. He clearly enjoyed movement, watching the ever-changing spectacle through the car windows, and the movement of other cars on the road. He spotted a speeder coming up very fast behind us, and identified cars, buses (he especially loved the bright-yellow school buses), eighteen-wheelers, and, once, on a side road, a slow, noisy tractor. He seemed very sensitive to, and intrigued by, large neon signs and advertisements, and liked picking out their letters as we passed. He had difficulty reading entire words, though he often guessed them correctly from one or two letters, or from the style of the signs. Other signs he saw but could not read. He was able to see and identify the changing colors of the traffic lights as we got into town.

He and Amy told us of other things he had seen since his operation, and of some of the unexpected confusions that could occur. He had seen the moon; it was larger than he expected. On one occasion, he was puzzled by seeing "a fat airplane" in the sky—"stuck, not moving." It turned out to be a blimp. Occasionally, he had seen birds; they made him jump, sometimes, if they came too close. (Of course, they did *not* come that close, Amy explained. Virgil simply had no idea of distance.)

Much of their time recently had been spent shopping—there had been the wedding to prepare for, and Amy wanted to show Virgil off, tell his story to the clerks and shopkeepers they knew, let them see a transformed Virgil for themselves. It was fun; the local television station had aired a story about Virgil's operation, and people would recognize him and come up to shake his hand. But supermarkets and other stores were also dense visual spectacles of objects of all kinds, often in bright packaging, and provided good "exercise" for Virgil's new sight. Among the first objects he had recognized, just the day after his bandages came off, were rolls of toilet paper on display. He had picked up a package, and given it to Amy, to prove he could see. Three days after surgery, they had gone to an I.G.A., and Virgil had seen shelves, fruit, cans, people, aisles, carts—so much that he got scared. "Everything ran together," he said. He needed to get out of the store and close his eyes for a bit.



He enjoyed uncluttered views, he said, of green hills and grass—especially after the over-full, over-rich visual spectacles of shops—though it was difficult for him, Amy indicated, to connect the visual shapes of hills with the tangible hills he had walked up; and he had no idea of perspective. But the first month of seeing had been predominantly positive: "Every day seems like a great adventure, seeing more for the first time each day," Amy had written, summarizing it, in her journal.

When we arrived at the house, Virgil, caneless, walked by himself up the path to the front door, pulled out his key, grasped the doorknob, unlocked the door, and opened it. This was impressive—he could never have done it at first, he said—and was something he had been practicing since the day after surgery. It was his showpiece. But he said that in general he found walking "scary" and "confusing" without touch, without his cane, with his uncertain, unstable judgment of space and distance. Sometimes surfaces or objects would seem to loom, to be on top of him, when they were still quite a distance away; sometimes he would get confused by his own shadow—the whole concept of shadows, of objects blocking light, was puzzling to him—and would come to a stop, or trip, or try to step over it. Steps, in particular, posed a special hazard, because all he could see was a confusion, a flat surface, of parallel and crisscrossing lines; he could not see them (although he knew them) as solid objects going up or coming down in three-dimensional space. Now, five weeks after surgery, he often felt more disabled than he had felt when he was blind, and he had lost the confidence, the ease of moving, that he had possessed then. But he hoped all this would sort itself out with time.

I was not so sure; every patient described in the literature had faced great difficulties after surgery in the apprehension of space and distance—for months, even years. This was the case even in Valvo's highly intelligent patient H.S., who had been normally sighted until, at fifteen, he was corneally scarred by a chemical explosion, and had regained his vision twenty-two years later. He encountered grave difficulties of every kind, which he recorded, minutely, on tape:

> During these first weeks [after surgery] I had no appreciation of depth or distance; street lights were luminous stains stuck to the window panes, and the corridors of the hospital were black holes. When I crossed the road the traffic terrified me, even when I was accompanied. I am very insecure while walking; indeed I am more afraid now than before the operation.

We gathered in the kitchen at the back of the house, which had a large white deal table. Bob and I laid out all our test objects—color charts, letter charts, pictures, illusions—on it, and we set up a video camera to record the testing. As we settled down, Virgil's cat and dog bounded in to greet and check us—and Virgil, we noted, had some difficulty telling which was which. This comic and embarrassing problem had persisted since he returned home from surgery: both animals, as it happened, were black-and-white, and he kept confusing them—to their annoyance—unless he could touch them, too. Sometimes, Amy said, she would see him examining the cat carefully, looking at its head, its ears, its paws, its tail, and touching each part gently as he did so. I observed this myself the next day—Virgil feeling and looking at Tibbles with extraordinary intentness, correlating the cat. He would keep doing this, Amy remarked ("You'd think once was enough"), but the new ideas, the visual recognitions, kept slipping from his mind.

Cheselden described a strikingly similar scene with his young patient in the seventeen-twenties:

> One particular only, though it might appear trifling, I will relate: Having often forgot which was the cat, and which the dog, he was ashamed to ask; but catching the cat, which he knew by feeling, he was observed to look at her steadfastly, and then, setting her down, said, So, puss, I shall know you another time. . . . Upon being told what things were . . . he would carefully observe that he might know them again; and (as he said) at first learned to know, and again forgot, a thousand things in a day.

Virgil's first formal recognitions when the bandages were taken off had been of letters on the ophthalmologist's eye chart, and we decided to test him, first, on letter recognition. He could not see ordinary newsprint clearly—his acuity was still only about 20/80—but he readily perceived letters that were more than a third of an inch high. Here he did rather well, for the most part, and recognized all the commoner letters (at least, capital letters) easily—as he had been able to do from the moment the bandages were removed. How was it that he had so much difficulty recognizing faces, or the cat, and so much difficulty with shapes generally, and with size and distance, and yet had little—or at least much less—difficulty recognizing letters? When I asked Virgil about it, he told me that he had learned the alphabet by touch at school, where they had used letter blocks, or cutout letters, for teaching the blind. I was much struck by this. Moreover, as Gregory relates of S.B., "much to our surprise, he could even tell the time by means of a large clock on the wall. We were so surprised at this that we did not at first believe that he could have been in any sense blind before the operation." But in his blind days S.B. had used a large hunter watch with no glass, telling the time by touching the hands, and had apparently made an instant "cross-modal" transfer, to use Gregory's term, from touch to vision.

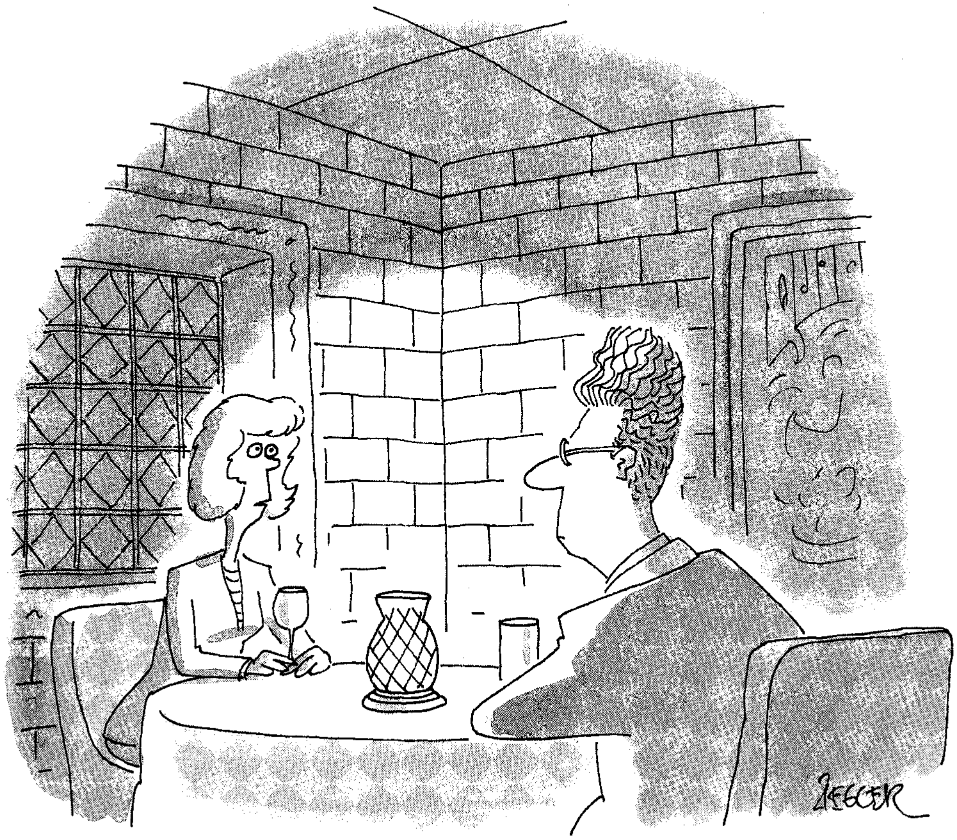
But while Virgil could recognize individual letters easily, he could not string them together—could not read, or even see words. I found this puzzling, for he said that they used not only Braille but English, in raised or inscribed letters, at school—and that he had learned to read fairly fluently. Indeed, he could still easily read the inscriptions on war memorials and tombstones by touch. But his eyes seemed to fix on particular letters, and to be incapable of the easy movement, the scanning, that is needed to read. This was also the case with the literate H.S.:

> My first attempts at reading were painful. I could make out single letters, but it was impossible for me to make out whole words; I managed to do so only after weeks of exhausting attempts. In fact, it was impossible for me to remember all the letters together, after having read them one by one. Nor was it possible for me, during the first weeks, to count my own five fingers: I had the feeling that they were all there, but . . . it was not possible for me to pass from one to the other while counting.

Further problems became apparent as we spent the day with Virgil. He would pick up details incessantly—an angle, an edge, a color, a movement—but would not be able to synthesize them, to form a complex perception at a glance. This was one reason the cat, visually, was so puzzling: he would see a paw, the nose, the tail, an ear, but could not see all of them together, see the cat as a whole.

Amy had commented in her journal on how even the most "obvious" connections—visually and logically obvious—had to be learned. Thus, Amy told us, a few days after the operation "he said that trees didn't look like anything on earth," but in her entry for October 21st, a month after the operation, she noted, "Virgil finally put a tree together—he now knows that the trunk and leaves go together to form a complete unit." And, on another occasion: "Skyscrapers strange, cannot understand how they stay up without collapsing."

Many—or perhaps all—patients in Virgil's situation had had similar difficulties. One such patient (described by Eduard Raehlmann, in 1891), though she had had a little vision preoperatively and had frequently handled dogs, "had no idea of how the head, legs, and ears were connected to the animal." Of such difficulties, which may seem almost incomprehensible, or absurd, to the rest of us, Valvo remarks, "The real difficulty here is that simultaneous perception of objects is an unaccustomed way to those used to sequential perception through touch." We,



"May I remind you that until quite recently it wasn't called the Lyle Lovett look. It was called the Eraserhead look."

with a full complement of senses, live in space and time; the blind live in a world of time alone. For the blind build their worlds from sequences of impressions (tactile, auditory, olfactory), and are not capable, as sighted people are, of a simultaneous visual perception, the making of an instantaneous visual scene. Indeed, if one can no longer see in space then the *idea* of space becomes incomprehensible—and this even for highly intelligent people blinded relatively late in life. This is powerfully conveyed by John Hull in his remarkable autobiography, "Touching the Rock," when he speaks of himself, of the blind, as "living in time" almost exclusively. With the blind, he writes,

> this sense of being in a place is less pronounced. . . . Space is reduced to one's own body, and the position of the body is known not by what objects have been passed but by how long it has been in motion. Position is thus measured by time. . . . For the blind, people are not there unless they speak. . . . People are in motion, they are temporal, they come and they go. They come out of nothing; they disappear.

ALTHOUGH Virgil could recognize letters and numbers, and could write them, too, he mixed up some rather similar ones ("A" and "H," for example) and, on occasion, wrote some backward. (Hull describes how, after only five years of blindness in his forties, his own visual memories had become so uncertain that he was not sure which way around a "3" went, and had to trace it in the air with his fingers.) Still, Virgil's performance was an impressive one for a man who had not seen for forty-five years. But the world does not consist of letters and numbers. How would he do with objects and pictures? How would he do outside, in the real world?

His first impressions when the bandages were removed were especially of color, and it seemed to be color, which has no analogue in the world of touch, that excited and delighted him—this was very clear from the way he spoke, and from Amy's journal. (The recognition of colors and movement seems to be innate.) It was colors to which Virgil continually alluded, the chromatic unexpectedness of new sights. He had had Greek salad and spaghetti the night before, he told us, and the spaghetti startled him: "White round strings, like fishing line," he said. "I thought it'd be brown."

Seeing light and shape and movements, seeing colors above all, had been completely unexpected, and had had a physical and emotional impact almost shocking, explosive. ("I felt the violence of these sensations," wrote Valvo's patient H.S., "like a blow on the head. The violence of the emotion . . . was akin to the very strong emotion I felt on seeing my wife for the first time, and when out in a car, I saw the huge monuments of Rome.")

We found that Virgil easily distinguished a great array of colors, and matched them without difficulty. But, confusingly, or confusedly, he sometimes gave colors the wrong names: yellow, for example, he called pink, but he knew that it was the same color as a banana. We wondered at first whether he could have a color agnosia or color anomia—defects of color association and color naming that are due to damage in specific areas of the brain. But these difficulties, it seemed to us, came from lack of learning—from the fact that early and long blindness had sometimes prevented his associating colors with their names or had caused him to forget some of the associations he had made. Such associations and the neural connections which underlay them, feeble in the first place, had become disestablished in his brain, not through any damage or disease but simply from disuse.

Although Virgil believed that he had visual memories, including color memories, from the remote past—on our drive from the airport he had spoken of growing up on the farm in Kentucky ("I see the creek running down the middle," "birds on the fences," "the big old white house")—I could not decide whether these were genuine memories, visual images in his mind, or mere verbal descriptions without images (like Helen Keller's).

How was he with shapes? Here matters were more complicated, because in the weeks since his surgery Virgil had been practicing shapes, correlating their look and their feel. No such practice had been required with colors. He had at first been unable to recognize any shapes visually—even shapes as simple as a square or a circle, which he recognized instantly by touch. To him, a touch square in no sense corresponded to a sight square. This was his answer to the Molyneux question. For this reason, Amy had bought, among other things, a child's wooden pegboard, with large, simple blocks—square, triangle, circle, and rectangle—to be fitted into corresponding holes, and had got Virgil to practice with it every day. Virgil found the task impossible at first, but quite easy now, after practicing for a month. He still tended to feel the holes and shapes before matching them, but when we forbade this he fitted them together quite fluently by sight alone.

Solid objects, it was evident, presented much more difficulty, because their appearance was so variable; and much of the past five weeks had been devoted to the exploration of objects, their unexpected vicissitudes of appearance as they were seen from near or far, or half concealed, or from different places and angles.

On the day he returned home after the bandages were removed, his house and its contents were unintelligible to him, and he had to be led up the garden path, led through the house, led into each room, and introduced to each chair. Within a week, with Amy's help, he had established a canonical line—a particular line up the path, through the sitting room to the kitchen, with further lines, as necessary, to the bathroom and the bedroom. It was only from this line, at first, that he could recognize anything—though this took a great deal of interpretation and inference; thus, he learned, for example, that "a whiteness to the right," to be seen as he came obliquely through the front door, was in fact the dining table in the next room, although at this point neither "table" nor "dining room" was a clear visual concept. If he deviated from the line, he would be totally disoriented. Then, carefully, with Amy's help, he started to use the line as a home base, making short sallies and excursions to either side of it, so that he could see the room, feel its walls and contents from different angles, and build up a sense of space, of solidity, of perspective.

As Virgil explored the rooms of his house, investigating, so to speak, the visual construction of the world, I was reminded of an infant moving his hand to and fro before his eyes, waggling his head, turning it this way and that, in his primal construction of the world. Most of us have no sense of the immensity of this construction, for we perform it seamlessly, unconsciously, thousands of times every day, at a glance. But this is not so for a baby, it was not so for Virgil, and it is not so for, say, an artist who wants to experience his perceptions individually and anew. Cézanne wrote to his son, "The same subject seen from a different angle gives a subject for study of the highest interest and so varied that I think I could be occupied for months without changing my place, simply bending more to the right or left."

We achieve perceptual constancy—the correlation of all the different appearances, the transforms of objects—very early, in the first months of life. It constitutes a huge learning task, yet is achieved so swiftly and automatically that its enormous complexity is scarcely realized (though it is an achievement that even the largest supercomputers cannot begin to match). But for Virgil, with half a century of forgetting whatever visual engrams he had constructed, the learning, or relearning, of these transforms required hours of conscious and systematic exploration each day. This first month, then, saw a systematic exploration, by sight and touch, of all the smaller things in the house: fruit, vegetables, bottles, cans, cutlery, flowers, the knickknacks on the mantelpiece—turning them round and round, holding them close to him, then at arm's length, trying to synthesize their varying appearances into a sense of unitary objecthood.

Despite all the vexations that trying to see could entail, Virgil had stuck with this gamely, and he had learned steadily. He had little difficulty recognizing the fruit, the bottles, the cans in the kitchen, the different flowers in the living room, and other common objects in the house.

Unfamiliar objects were much more difficult. When I took a blood-pressure cuff from my medical bag, he was completely flummoxed and could make nothing of it, but he recognized it immediately when I allowed him to touch it. Moving objects presented a special problem, for their appearance changed constantly. Even his dog, he told me, looked so different at different times that he wondered if it was the same dog. He was utterly lost when it came to the rapid changes in others' physiognomies. Such difficulties are almost universal among the early blinded restored to sight. Gregory's patient S.B. could not recognize individual faces, or their expressions, a year after his eyes had been operated on, despite perfectly normal elementary vision.

What about pictures? Here I had been given conflicting reports about Virgil. He was said to love television, to follow everything on it—and, indeed, a huge new TV stood in the living room, an emblem of Virgil's new life as a seeing person. We tried him first on still pictures, pictures in magazines, and with those he had no success at all. He could not see people, could not see objects—did not comprehend the idea of representation. It was similar with Cheselden's young patient:

> We thought he soon knew what pictures represented . . . but we found afterwards we were mistaken; for about two months after he was couched, he discovered at once they represented solid bodies, when to that time he considered them only as party-coloured planes, or surfaces diversified with variety of paint; but even then he was no less surprised, expecting the pictures would feel like the things they represented, . . . and asked which was the lying sense, feeling or seeing?

Nor were things any better with moving pictures on a TV screen. Mindful of Virgil's passion for listening to baseball games, we found a channel with a game in progress. It seemed at first as if he were following it visually, because he could describe who was batting, what was going on. But as soon as we turned off the sound he was lost. It became evident that he himself perceived little beyond streaks of light and colors and motions, and that all the rest (what he *seemed* to see) was interpretation, performed swiftly, and perhaps unconsciously, in consonance with the sound. How it would be with a real game we were far from sure—it seemed possible to us that he might see and enjoy a good deal—but in the representation of reality, pictorial or televisual, he was at this point completely at sea.

Virgil had now had two hours of testing, and was beginning to get tired—both visually and cognitively tired, as he had tended to do since the operation—and when he got tired he could see less and less, and had more and more difficulty making sense of what he could see.

Indeed, we were getting restless ourselves, and wanted to get out after a morning of testing. We asked him, as a final task before going for a drive, if he felt up to some drawing. We suggested first that he draw a hammer. (A hammer was the first object S.B. drew.) Virgil agreed, and, rather shakily, began to draw. He tended to guide the pencil's movement with his free hand. ("He only does that because he's tired now," said Amy.) Then he drew a car (very high and old-fashioned); a plane (with the tail missing: it would have been hard put to fly); and a house (flat and crude, like a three-year-old's drawing).

WHEN we finally got out, it was a brilliant October morning, and Virgil was blinded for a minute, until he put on a pair of dark-green sunglasses. Even ordinary daylight, he said, seemed far too bright for him, too glary; he felt that he saw best in quite subdued light. We asked him where he would like to go, and after thinking for a little he said, "The zoo." He had never been to a zoo, he said, and he was curious to know how the different animals looked. He had loved animals ever since his childhood days on the farm.

Very striking, as soon as we got to the zoo, was Virgil's sensitivity to motion. He was startled, first, by an odd strutting movement; it made him smile—he had never seen anything like it. "What is it?" he asked.

"An emu."

He wasn't quite sure what an emu was, so we asked him to describe it to us. He had difficulty, and could say only that it was about the same size as Amy—she and the emu were standing side by side at that point—but that its movements were quite different from hers. He wanted to touch it, to feel it all over. If he did that, he thought, he would then see it better. But touching, sadly, was not allowed.

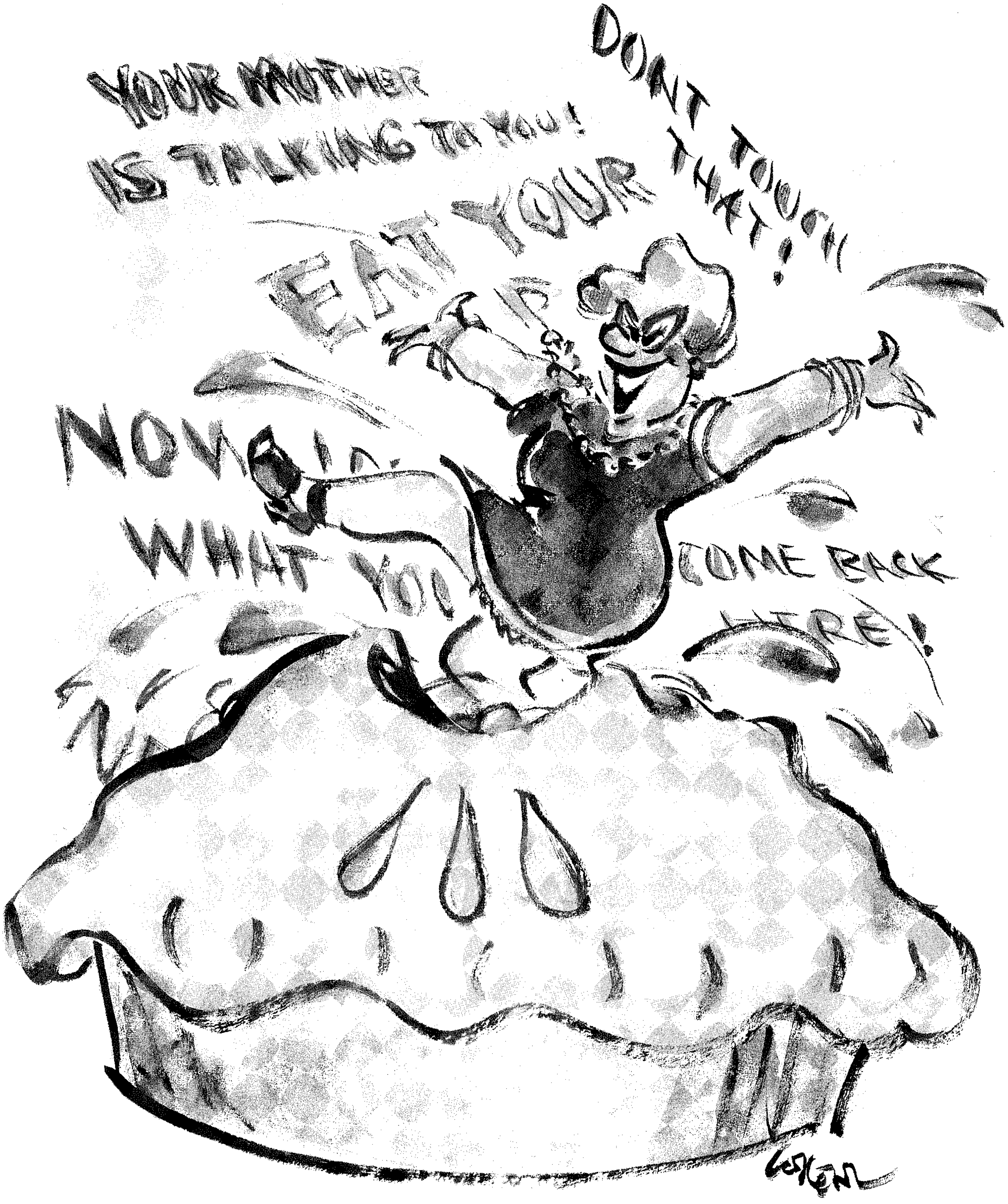
His eye was caught next by a leaping motion nearby, and he immediately realized—or, rather, surmised—that it must be a kangaroo. His eye followed its motions closely, but he could not describe it, he said, unless he could feel it. We were wondering by now exactly what he could see—and what, indeed, he meant by "seeing."

In general, it seemed to us, if Virgil could identify an animal it would be either by its motion or by virtue of a single feature—thus, he might identify a kangaroo because it leaped, a giraffe by its height, or a zebra by its stripes—but he could not form any over-all impression of the animal. It was also necessary that the animal be sharply defined against a background; he could not identify the elephants, despite their trunks, because they were at a considerable distance and stood against a slate-colored background.

Finally, we went to the great-ape en-

ARTIST'S NOTEBOOK BY LEE LORENZ

MOM 'N' APPLE PIE


YOUR MOTHER IS TALKING TO YOU!
DON'T TOUCH THAT!
EAT YOUR
NOW
WHAT YOU
COME BACK HERE!

closure; Virgil was curious to see the gorilla. He could not see it at all when it was half hidden among some trees, and when it finally came into the open he thought that, though it moved differently, it looked just like a large man. Fortunately, there was a life-size bronze statue of a gorilla in the enclosure, and we told Virgil, who had been longing to touch all the animals, that he could, if nothing else, at least examine the statue. Exploring it swiftly and minutely with his hands, he had an air of assurance that he had never shown when examining anything by sight. It came to me—perhaps it came to all of us at this moment—how skillful and self-sufficient he had been as a blind man, how naturally and easily he had experienced his world with his hands, and how much we were now, so to speak, pushing him against the grain: demanding that he renounce all that came easily to him, that he sense the world in a way incredibly difficult for him, and alien.

His face seemed to light up with comprehension as he felt the statue. "It's not like a man at all," he murmured. The statue examined, he opened his eyes, and turned around to the real gorilla standing before him in the enclosure. And now, in a way that would have been impossible before, he described the ape's posture, the way the knuckles touched the ground, the little bandy legs, the great canines, the huge ridge on the head, pointing to each feature as he did so. Gregory writes of a wonderful episode with his patient S.B., who had a long-standing interest in tools and machinery. Gregory took him to the Science Museum in London to see its grand collection:

> The most interesting episode was his reaction to the fine Maudeslay screw cutting lathe which is housed in a special glass case. . . . We led him to the glass case, which was closed, and asked him to tell us what was in it. He was quite unable to say anything about it, except that he thought the nearest part was a handle. . . . We then asked a museum attendant (as previously arranged) for the case to be opened, and S.B. was allowed to touch the lathe. The result was startling. . . . He ran his hands eagerly over the lathe, with his eyes tight shut. Then he stood back a little and opened his eyes and said: "Now that I've felt it I can see."

So it was with Virgil and the gorilla. This spectacular example of how touching could make seeing possible explained something else that had puzzled me. Since the operation, Virgil had begun to buy toy soldiers, toy cars, toy animals, miniatures of famous buildings—an entire Lilliputian world—and to spend hours with them. It was not mere childishness or playfulness that had driven him to such pastimes. Through touching these at the same time he looked at them, he could forge a crucial correlation; he could prepare himself to see the real world by learning first to see this toy world. The disparity of scale did not matter, any more than it mattered to S.B., who was instantly able to tell the time on a large wall clock because he could correlate it with what he knew by touch from his pocket watch.

For lunch, we repaired to a local fish restaurant, and as we ate I stole glances, from time to time, at Virgil. He started eating, I observed, in the normal sighted fashion, accurately spearing segments of tomato in his salad. Then, as he continued, his aim grew worse: his fork started to miss its targets, and to hover, uncertainly, in the air. Finally, unable to "see," or make sense of, what was on his plate, he gave up the effort and started to use his hands, to eat as he used to, as a blind person eats. Amy had already told me about such relapses, and described them in her journal. There had been similar reversions, for example, with his shaving, where he would start with a mirror, shaving by sight, with tense concentration. Then the strokes of the razor would become slower, and he would start to peer uncertainly at his face in the mirror, or try to confirm what he half saw by touch. Finally, he would turn away from the mirror, or close his eyes, or turn the light off, and finish the job by feel.

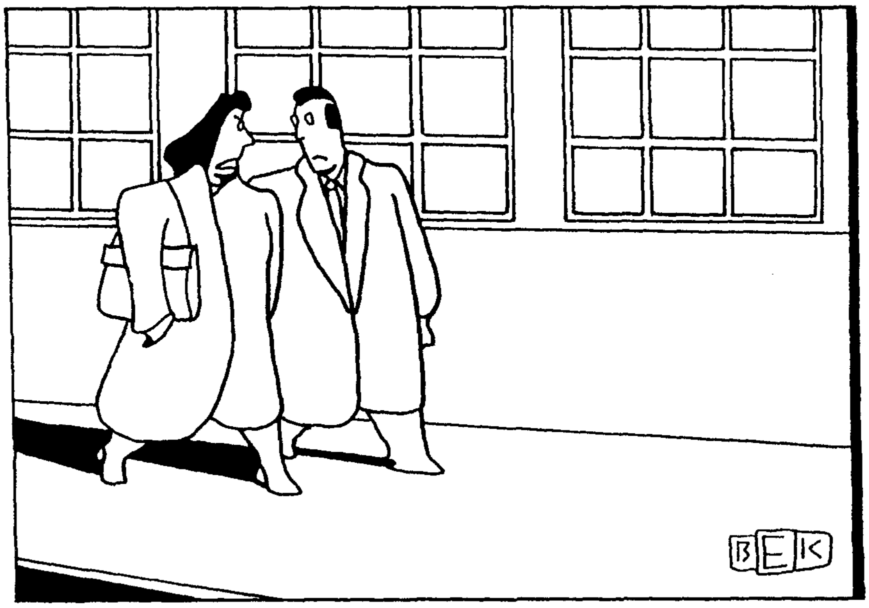
That Virgil should have periods of acute visual fatigue following sustained visual effort or use was scarcely surprising; all of us have them if too much is demanded of our vision. Something happens to my own visual system if, for instance, I look at EEGs non-stop for three hours: I start missing things on the traces, and seeing dazzling afterimages of the squiggles wherever I look—the walls, the ceiling, all over the visual field—and at this point I need to stop and do something else, or, even better, close my eyes for an hour. And Virgil's visual system, by comparison with the normal one, must have been at this stage labile in the extreme.

Less easy to understand, and alarming, perhaps ominous, were long periods of "blurriness"—impaired vision or gnosis—lasting hours, or even days, coming on spontaneously, without obvious reason. Bob Wasserman was very much puzzled by Virgil's and Amy's descriptions of these fluctuations; he had been practicing ophthalmology for some twenty-five years, and removed many cataracts, but he had never encountered fluctuations of this sort.

After lunch, we all went to Dr. Hamlin's office. Dr. Hamlin had taken detailed photographs of the retina right after surgery, and Bob, examining the eye now (with both direct and indirect ophthalmoscopy) and comparing it with the photographs, could see no evidence of any postoperative complications. (A special test—fluorescein angiography—had shown a small degree of cystoid macular edema, but this would not have caused the rapid fluctuations that were so striking.) Because there seemed to be no adequate local or ocular cause for these fluctuations, Bob wondered whether they could be a consequence of some underlying medical condition—we had been struck by how unwell Virgil looked as soon as we met him—or whether they could represent a *neural* reaction of the brain's visual system to conditions of sensory or cognitive overload. It is no effort for the normally sighted to construct shapes, boundaries, objects, and scenes from purely visual sensations; they have been making such visual constructs, a visual world, from the moment of birth, and have developed a vast, effortless cognitive apparatus for doing so. (Ordinarily, a half of the cerebral cortex is given over to visual processing.) But in Virgil these cognitive powers, undeveloped, were rudimentary; the visual-cognitive parts of his brain might easily have been overwhelmed.

Brain systems in all animals may respond to overwhelming stimulation, or stimulation past a critical point, with a sudden shutdown. Such reactions have nothing to do with the individual or his motives. They are purely local and physiological, and can occur even in isolated slices of cerebral cortex: they are a biological defense against neural overload.

Still, perceptual-cognitive processes,



"I can't cook, but I can pay."

while physiological, are also personal—it is not *a* world which one perceives or constructs but *one's own* world—and they lead to, are linked to, a perceptual self, with a will, an orientation, and a style of its own. This perceptual self may also collapse with the collapse of perceptual systems, and alter the orientation and the very identity of the individual. If this occurs, an individual not only becomes blind but ceases to behave as a visual being, yet offers no report of any change in inner state, is completely oblivious of his own visuality or lack of it. Such a condition, of total psychic blindness (known as Anton's syndrome), may occur if there is massive damage, as from a stroke, to the visual parts of the brain. But it also seemed to occur, on occasion, with Virgil. At such times, indeed, he might talk of "seeing" while in fact appearing blind and showing no visual behavior whatever. One had to wonder whether the whole basis of visual perception and identity in Virgil was as yet so feeble that under conditions of overload or exhaustion he might go in and out of not merely physical blindness but a total Anton-like psychic blindness.

A QUITE different sort of visual shutdown—a withdrawal—seems to be associated with situations of great emotional stress or conflict. And for Virgil this period was indeed as stressful a time as he had ever known: he had just had surgery, he had just been married; the even tenor of his blind, bachelor life had been shattered; he was under a tremendous pressure of expectation; and seeing itself was confusing, exhausting. These pressures had increased as his wedding day approached, especially with the convergence of his own family in town; his family had not only opposed the surgery in the first place but now insisted that he was in fact still blind. All this was documented by Amy in her journal:

> October 9: Went to church to decorate for wedding. Virgil's vision quite blurry. Not able to distinguish much. It is as though sight has taken a nosedive. Virgil acting "blind" again. . . . Having me lead him around.
>
> October 11: Virgil's family arrives today. His sight seems to have gone on vacation. . . . It is as though he has gone back to being blind! Family arrived. Couldn't believe he could see. Every time he said he could see something they would say, "Ah, you're just guessing." They treated him as though he was totally blind—leading him around, giving him anything he wanted. . . . I am very nervous, and Virgil's sight has disappeared. . . . Want to be sure we are doing the right thing.
>
> October 12: Wedding day. Virgil very calm . . . vision little clearer, but still blurry. . . . Could see me coming down aisle, but was very blurry. . . . Wedding beautiful. Party at Mom's. Virgil surrounded by family. They still cannot accept his sight, he could not see much. Said goodbye to his family tonight. Sight began clearing up right after they left.

Thus there seemed to be two distinct forms of "blind behavior" or "acting blind"—one a collapse of visual identity on a neurological basis, the other a massive withdrawal or regression on a strategic basis, in the face of overwhelming emotional stress.

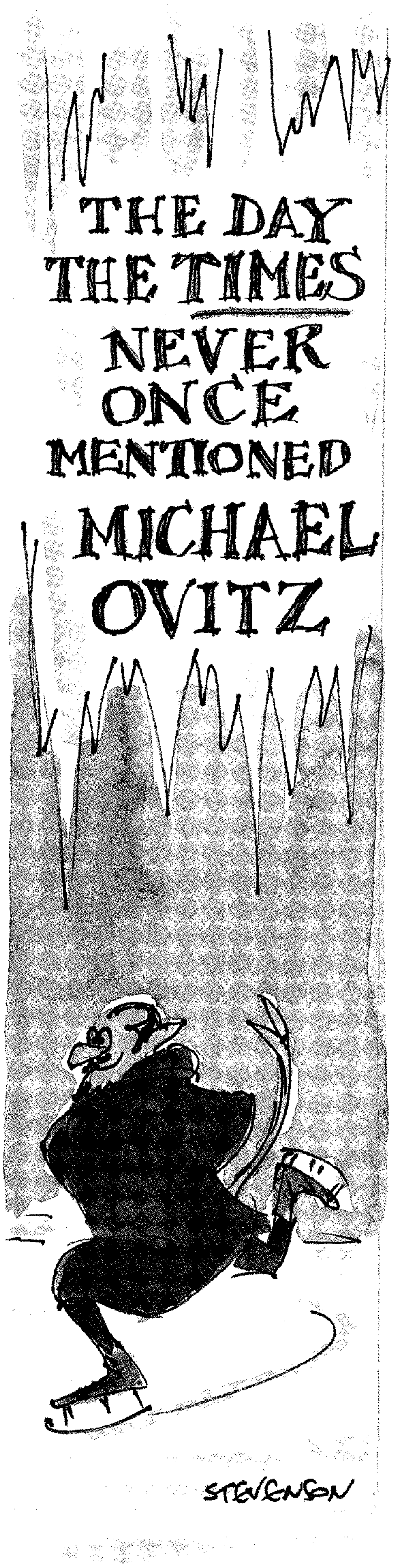
Then again, given the extreme physiological instability of his vision, who was to know exactly what was going on? When a specific organic weakness exists, emotional stress can easily press toward a physical (or psychosomatic) form; thus, asthmatics get asthma under stress, parkinsonians become more parkinsonian, and someone like Virgil, with borderline vision, may get pushed over the border and become (temporarily) blind. It was, therefore, exceedingly difficult at times to distinguish between what was physiological and what was psychological in him—what was "motivated behavior" and what was physiological weakness.

Marius von Senden, reviewing every published case over a three-hundred-year period in his classic book "Space and Sight" (1932), concluded that every newly sighted adult sooner or later comes to a "motivation crisis"—and that not every patient gets through it. He tells of one patient who felt so threatened by sight (which would have meant his leaving the Asylum for the Blind, and his fiancée there) that he threatened to tear his eyes out; he cites case after case of patients who "behave blind" or "refuse to see" after an operation, and of others who, fearful of what sight may entail, refuse operation (one such account, entitled "L'Aveugle Qui Refuse de Voir," was published as early as 1771). Both Gregory and Valvo dilate on the emotional dangers of forcing a new sense on a blind man—how, after an initial exhilaration, a devastating (and even lethal) depression could ensue.

Precisely such a depression descended on Gregory's patient: S.B.'s period in the hospital was full of excitement and perceptual progress. But the promise was not fulfilled. Six months after the operation, Gregory reports,

> we formed a strong impression that his sight was to him almost entirely disappointing. It enabled him to do a little more . . . but it became clear that the opportunities it afforded him were less than he had imagined. . . . He still to a great extent lived the life of a blind man, sometimes not bothering to put on the light at night. . . . He did not get on well with his neighbours [now], who regarded him as "odd," and his workmates [previously so admiring] played tricks on him and teased him for being unable to read.

S.B.'s depression deepened, he became ill, and, two years after his opera-


THE DAY THE TIMES NEVER ONCE MENTIONED MICHAEL OVITZ
STEVENSON

tion, he died. He had been perfectly healthy, he had once enjoyed life; he was only fifty-four.

Valvo provides us with six exemplary tales, and a profound discussion, of the feelings and behavior of early-blinded people when they are confronted with the "gift" of sight, and with the necessity of renouncing one world, one identity, for another.

A major conflict in Virgil, as in all newly sighted people, was the uneasy relation of touch and sight—not knowing whether to look or feel. This was obvious in Virgil from the day of the operation, and was very evident the day we saw him, when he could hardly keep his hands off the pegboard, longed to touch all the animals, and gave up spearing his food. His vocabulary, his whole sensibility, his picture of the world, was couched in tactile—or, at least, nonvisual—terms. He was, or had been until his operation, a touch person through and through.

It has been well established that in congenitally deaf people (especially if they are native signers) some of the auditory parts of the brain are reallocated for visual use. It has also been well established that in blind people who read Braille the reading finger has an exceptionally large representation in the tactile parts of the cerebral cortex. And one would suspect that the tactile (and auditory) parts of the cortex are enlarged in the blind, and may even extend into what is normally visual cortex. What remains of the visual cortex, without visual stimulation, may be largely undeveloped. It seems likely that such a differentiation of cerebral development would follow the early loss of a sense and the compensatory enhancement of other senses.

If this was the case in Virgil, what might happen if visual function was suddenly made possible, demanded? One might certainly expect *some* visual learning, some development of new pathways in the visual parts of the brain. There had never been any documentation of the kindling of activity in the visual cortex of an adult, and we hoped to take special PET scans of Virgil's visual cortex to show this as he learned to see. But what would this learning, this activation, be like? Would it be like a baby first learning to see? (This was Amy's first thought.) But the newly sighted are not on the same starting line, neurologically speaking, as babies, whose cerebral cortex is "equipotential"—equally ready to adapt to any form of perception. The cortex of an early-blinded adult such as Virgil has already become highly adapted to organizing perceptions in time and not in space.

An infant merely learns. This is a huge, never-ending task, but it is not one charged with irresoluble conflict. A newly sighted adult, by contrast, has to make a radical switch from a sequential to a visual-spatial mode, and such a switch flies in the face of the experience of an entire lifetime. Gregory emphasizes this, pointing out how conflict and crisis are inevitable if "the perceptual habits and strategies of a lifetime" are to be changed. Such conflicts are built into the nature of the nervous system itself, for the early-blinded adult who has spent a lifetime adapting and specializing his brain must now ask his brain to reverse all this. (Moreover, the brain of an adult no longer has the plasticity of a child's brain—that is why learning new languages or new skills becomes more difficult with age. But in the case of a man previously blind, learning to see is not like learning another language; it is, as Diderot puts it, like learning language for the first time.)

In the newly sighted, learning to see demands a radical change in neurological functioning and, with it, a radical change in psychological functioning, in self, in identity. The change may be experienced in literally life-and-death terms. Valvo quotes a patient of his as saying, "One must die as a sighted person to be born again as a blind person," and the opposite is equally true: one must die as a blind person to be born again as a seeing person. And here, blindness is no more a negative condition, a privation, than seeing. It is a *different* condition, a different form of being, with its own sensibilities and coherence and feeling. It is indeed what John Hull calls "deep blindness . . . one of the orders of human being."

ON October 31st, the cataract in Virgil's left eye was removed, and revealed a retina, an acuity, similar to the right. This was a great disappointment, for there had been hope that it might be a far better eye—enough to make a crucial difference to his vision. His vision did improve slightly: he fixated better, and the searching eye movements were fewer, and he had a larger visual field.

With both eyes working, Virgil now went back to work, but found, increasingly, that there was another side to seeing, that much of it was confusing, and some downright shocking. He had worked happily at the Y for thirty years, he said, and thought he *knew* all the bodies of his clients. Now he found himself startled by seeing bodies, and skins, that he had previously known only by touch; he was amazed at the range of skin colors he saw, and slightly disgusted by blemishes and "stains" in skins that to his hands had seemed perfectly smooth. (Gregory observes of S.B., "He also found some things he loved ugly (including his wife and himself!), and he was frequently upset by the blemishes and imperfections of the visible world.") Virgil found it a relief, when giving massages, to shut his eyes.

He continued to improve, visually, over the ensuing weeks, especially when he was free to set his own pace. He did his utmost to live the life of a sighted man, but he also became more conflicted at this time. He expressed fears, occasionally, that he would have to throw away his cane and walk outside, cross the streets, by vision alone; and, on one occasion, a fear that he might be "expected" to drive, and take up an entirely new, sighted job. This, then, was a time of great striving and real success—but success achieved, one felt, at a psychological cost, at a cost of deepening strain and splitting in himself.

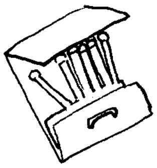
There had been one outing, a week before Christmas, when he and Amy went to the ballet. Virgil enjoyed "The Nutcracker": he had always loved the music, and now, for the first time, he saw something as well. "I could see people jumping around the stage. Couldn't see what they were wearing, though," he said. He thought he would enjoy seeing a live baseball game, and looked forward to the start of the season in the spring.

Christmas was a particularly festive and important time—the first Christmas after his wedding, his first Christmas as a sighted man—and he returned, with Amy, to the family farm in Kentucky. He saw his mother for the first time in more than forty years—he had scarcely been able to see her, to see anything much, at the time of the wedding—and thought she looked "real pretty." He saw again the old farmhouse, the fences, the creek in the pasture, which he had also not seen since he was a child; he had never ceased to cherish them in his mind. Some of his seeing had been a great disappointment, but seeing home and family was not—it was a pure joy.

No less important was the change in the family's attitude toward him. "He seemed more alert," his sister said. "He would walk, move around the house, without touching the walls—he would just get up and go." She felt that there had been "a big difference" since he was first operated on, and his mother and the rest of the family felt the same.

I phoned them, the day before Christmas, and spoke to his mother, his sister, and others. They asked me to join them, and I wish I could have done so, for it seemed to be an affirmative time for them all. The family's initial opposition to Virgil's seeing (and perhaps to Amy, too, for having "pushed" it) and their disbelief that he *could* actually see had been something that he internalized, something that could literally annihilate his seeing. Now that the family was "converted," a major psychological block, one hoped, might dissolve. Christmas was the climax, but also the resolution, of an extraordinary year.

What would happen, I wondered, in the coming year? What might he hope for, at best? How much of a visual world, a visual life, might still await him? We were, frankly, quite unsure at this point. Grim and frightening though the histories of so many patients were, some, at least, overcame the worst of their difficulties and emerged into a relatively unconflicted new sight.



Valvo, normally cautious in expression, lets himself go a little in describing some of his patients' happier outcomes:

> Once our patients acquire visual patterns, and can work with them autonomously, they seem to experience great joy in visual learning . . . a renaissance of personality. . . . They start thinking about wholly new areas of experience.

A renaissance of personality—this was just what Amy wanted for Virgil. It was difficult for us to imagine such a "renaissance" in him, for he seemed so phlegmatic, so set in his ways. Despite a range of problems—retinal, cortical, psychological, possibly medical—he had done remarkably well in a way, had shown a steady ability to increase his power to apprehend a visual world. There seemed no reason that, with his predominantly positive motivation, and the obvious enjoyment and advantage he could get from seeing, he should not progress further. He could never hope to have perfect vision, but he certainly might hope for a life radically enlarged by seeing.

The catastrophe, when it came, was very sudden. On February 8th, I had a phone call from Amy: Virgil had collapsed, had been taken, gray and stuporous, to the hospital. He had a lobar pneumonia, a massive consolidation of one lung, and was in the intensive-care unit, on oxygen and intravenous antibiotics.

The first antibiotics used did not work: he grew worse; he grew critical; and for some days he hovered between life and death. Then, after three weeks, the infection was finally mastered, and the lung started to reëxpand. But Virgil himself remained gravely ill, for, though the pneumonia itself was clearing, it had tipped him into respiratory failure—a near-paralysis of the respiratory center in the brain, which made it unable to respond properly to levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the blood. The oxygen levels in his blood started to fall—fell to less than half of normal. And the level of carbon dioxide started to rise—rose to nearly three times normal. He needed oxygen constantly, but only a little could be given, lest his failing respiratory center be further depressed. With his brain deprived of oxygen and poisoned by carbon dioxide, Virgil's consciousness fluctuated and faded, and on bad days (when the oxygen in his blood was lowest and the carbon dioxide highest) he could see nothing: he was totally blind.

Much contributed to this continuing respiratory crisis: Virgil's lungs themselves were thickened and fibrotic; there was advanced bronchitis and emphysema; there was no movement of the diaphragm on one side, a consequence of his childhood polio; and, on top of all this, he was enormously obese—obese enough to cause a Pickwickian syndrome (named after the somnolent fat boy, Joe, in "The Pickwick Papers"). In Pickwickian syndrome, there is a grave depression of breathing, and failure to oxygenate the blood fully, associated with a depression of the respiratory center in the brain.

Virgil had probably been getting ill for some years; he had gradually been increasing in weight since 1985. But between his wedding and Christmas he had put on forty pounds—had shot up, in a few weeks, to two hundred and eighty pounds—partly from fluid retention caused by heart failure, and partly from non-stop eating, a habit of his under stress.

So he now had to spend three weeks in the hospital, his blood oxygen still plummeting to dangerously low levels, despite his being given oxygen—and each time the level grew really low he became lethargic and totally blind. Amy would know the moment she opened his door what sort of day he was having—where the blood oxygen was—depending on whether he used his eyes, looked around, or fumbled and touched, acted blind. (We wondered, in retrospect, whether the strange fluctuations his vision had shown from almost the day of surgery might be explained, at least in part, by fluctuations in his blood oxygen, with consequent retinal or cerebral anoxia. Virgil could have been close to respiratory failure and anoxia even before his acute illness.)

There was another, intermediate state, which Amy found very puzzling; at such times, he would *say* that he saw nothing whatever, but would reach for objects, avoid obstacles, and *behave* as if seeing. Amy could make nothing of this singular state, in which he manifestly responded to objects, could locate them, was seeing, and yet denied any consciousness of it. This condition, called implicit sight, unconscious sight, or blindsight, occurs if the visual parts of the cerebral cortex are knocked out (as they might be by a lack of oxygen, for instance) but the visual centers in the subcortex remain intact. Visual signals are perceived and are responded to appropriately, but nothing of this perception reaches consciousness at all.

At last, Virgil was able to leave the hospital and return home, but to return a respiratory cripple. He was tethered to an oxygen cylinder, and could not even stir from his chair without it. It seemed unlikely at this stage that he would ever recover sufficiently to go out and work again, and the Y now felt that it had to terminate his job. A few months later, he was forced to leave the house where he had lived as an employee of the Y. This was the situation last summer: Virgil had lost not only his health but his job and his house as well.

BY October, however, he was feeling better, and was able to go without oxygen for an hour or two at a time. It had not been wholly clear to me, from speaking to Virgil and Amy, what had finally happened to his vision after all these months. Amy said that it had "almost gone" but that now she felt it was coming back as he got better. When I phoned the visual-rehabilitation center where Virgil had been evaluated, I was given a different story. Virgil, I was told, seemed to have lost all the sight restored the previous year, with only a few bits remaining. Kathy, his therapist, thought he saw colors but little else—and sometimes colors without objects: thus he might see a haze or halo of pink around a Pepto-Bismol bottle without clearly seeing the bottle itself. This color perception, she said, was the only seeing that was constant; for the rest he appeared almost blind, missed objects, groped, seemed visually lost. He was showing his old, blind random movements of the eyes. And yet sometimes, spontaneously, out of the blue, he would get sudden, startling moments of vision, in which he would see objects, quite small ones. But these percepts would then "vanish," as suddenly as they came, and he was usually unable to retrieve them. For all practical purposes, she said, Virgil was now blind.

I was shocked and puzzled when Kathy told me this. These were phenomena radically different from anything he had shown before: what was happening now with his eyes and his brain? From a distance, I could not sort out what was happening, especially since Amy, for her part, maintained that Virgil's vision was now improving. Indeed, she got furious when she heard anyone say that Virgil was blind, and she maintained that the visual-rehab center was actually "teaching him to be blind." So in February of 1993, a year after the onset of his devastating illness, we brought Virgil and Amy to New York, to see us again and to get some specialized physiological tests of retinal and brain function.

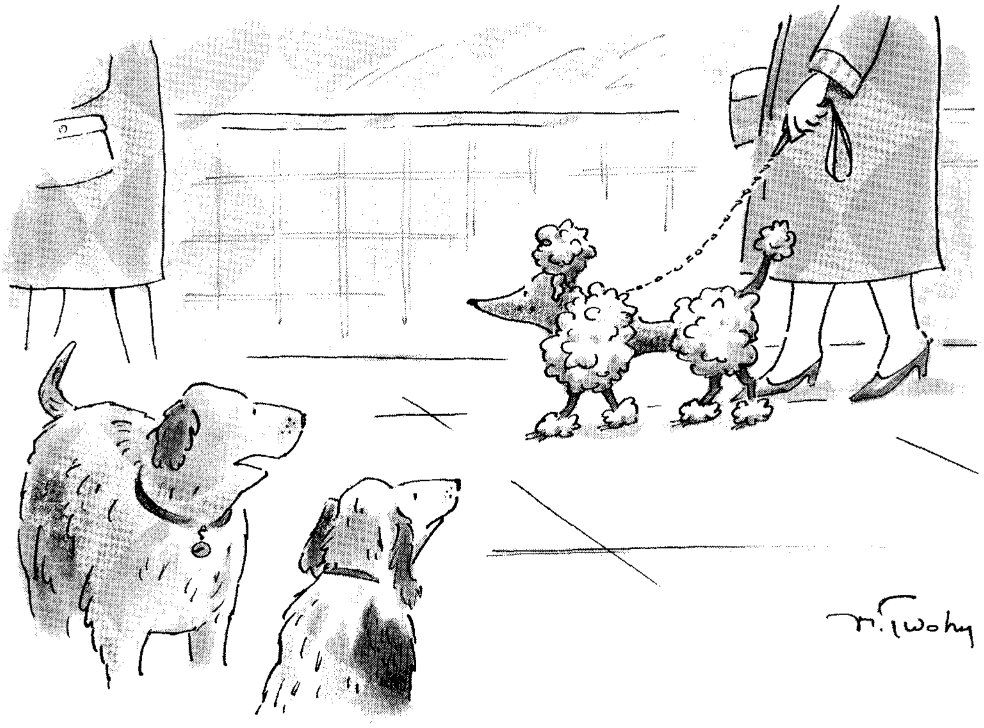
AS soon as I met Virgil, at the arrival gate at LaGuardia Airport, I could see for myself that everything had gone quite terribly wrong. He was now almost fifty pounds heavier than when I had met him in Oklahoma. He was carrying a cylinder of oxygen strung over one shoulder. He groped, his eyes wandered, he looked totally blind. Amy guided him, her hand under his elbow, everywhere they went. And yet sometimes as we drove over the Fifty-ninth Street Bridge into the city he would pick up something—a light on the bridge—not guessing but seeing it quite accurately. But he could never hold it or retrieve it, and so remained visually lost.

When we came to test him in my office—first using large colored targets, then large movements and flashlights—he missed everything. He seemed totally blind—*blinder than he had been before his operations*, because then, at least, even through his cataracts he could detect light, its direction, and the shadow of a hand moving before him. Now he could detect nothing whatever, no longer seemed to have any light-sensitive receptors: it was as if his retinas had gone. Yet not totally gone—that was the odd thing. For once in a while he would see something accurately: once, he saw, described, grasped a banana; on two occasions, he was able to follow a randomly moving light bar with his hands on a computer screen; and sometimes he would reach for objects, or "guess" them correctly, even though he said he saw "nothing" at such times—the blindsight that had first been observed in the hospital.

We were dismayed at his near-uniform failure, and he was sinking into a demoralized, defeated state—it was time to stop testing and take a break for lunch. As we passed him a bowl of fruit, and he felt the fruit with swift, sensitive, skillful fingers, his face lighted up, and he regained his animation. He gave us, as he handled the fruit, remarkable tactile descriptions, speaking of the waxy, slick quality of the plum skin, the soft fuzz of peaches and smoothness of nectarines ("like a baby's cheeks"), and the rough, dimpled skin of oranges. He weighed the fruits in his hand, spoke of their weight and consistency, their pips and stones; and then, lifting them to his nose, their different smells. We included an exceedingly clever wax pear among the real fruit; with its realistic shape and coloring, it had deceived sighted people completely. Virgil was not taken in for a moment: he burst out laughing as soon as he touched it. "It's a candle," he said immediately, somewhat puzzled. "Shaped like a bell or a pear." While he may indeed have been, in von Senden's words, "an exile from spatial reality," he was deeply at home in the world of touch, in time.

But if his sense of touch was perfectly

preserved, there were now, it was evident, just sparks from his retinas—rare, momentary sparks, from retinas that now seemed to be ninety-nine per cent dead. Bob Wasserman, too, who had not seen Virgil since our visit to Oklahoma, was appalled at the degradation of vision, and wanted to reëxamine the retinas. When he did so, they looked exactly as before—piebald, with areas of increased and decreased pigmentation. There was no evidence of any new disease. Yet the functioning of even the preserved areas of retina had fallen to almost zero. Electroretinograms, designed to record the retina's electrical activity when stimulated by light, were negative, and visual evoked potentials, designed to show activity in the visual parts of the brain, were absent—there was nothing, electrically, going on in either the retinas or the brain that could be recorded. This could not be attributed to the original disease, retinitis, which had long been inactive. Something else had emerged in the past year and had, in effect, extinguished his remaining retinal function.



"He must be very secure in his masculinity."

We remembered how Virgil had constantly complained of glare, even on relatively dull, overcast days—how glare seemed to blind him sometimes, so that he needed the darkest glasses. Was it possible (as my colleagues Kevin Halligan and Gerald Edelman suggested) that with the removal of his cataracts—cataracts that had perhaps shielded his fragile retinas for decades—the ordinary light of day had proved lethal, burned his retinas? It is said that patients with other retinal problems, like macular degeneration, may be exceedingly intolerant of light—not merely ultraviolet but light of all wavelengths—and that light may hasten the degeneration of their retinas. Was this what had happened with Virgil? It was one possibility—the Halligan-Edelman hypothesis. Should we have foreseen it, and rationed Virgil's sight, or the ambient light, in some way?

Another possibility—a likelier one—related to Virgil's continuing hypoxia, the fact that he had not had properly oxygenated blood for a year. We had clear accounts of his vision waxing and waning in the hospital as his blood gases went up and down. Could the repeated, or continuing, oxygen-starving of his retinas (and perhaps also of the visual areas of his cortex) have been the factor that did them in? The extinction, in either case, seems to be irreversible.

THIS, then, is Virgil's story, the story of a "miraculous" restoration of sight to a blind man, a story basically similar to that of Cheselden's young patient in 1728, and of a handful of others over the past three centuries—but with a bizarre and ironic twist at the end. Gregory's patient, so well adapted to blindness before his operation, was first delighted with seeing, but soon encountered intolerable stresses and difficulties, found the "gift" transformed to a curse, became deeply depressed, and soon after died. Almost all the earlier patients, indeed, after their initial euphoria, were overwhelmed by the enormous difficulties of adapting to a new sense; though a very few, as Valvo stresses, have adapted and done well. Could Virgil have surmounted these difficulties and adapted to seeing where so many others had foundered on the way?

We shall never know, for the business of adaptation—and, indeed, of life as he knew it—was suddenly cut across by a gratuitous blow of fate: an illness that, at a single stroke, deprived him of job, house, health, and independence, leaving him a gravely sick man, unable to fend for himself. For Amy, who incited the surgery in the first place, and who was so passionately invested in Virgil's seeing, it was a "miracle" that misfired, a calamity. Virgil, for his part, maintains philosophically, "These things happen." But he has been shattered by this blow, has given vent to outbursts of rage: rage at his helplessness and sickness; rage at the smashing of a promise and a dream; and, beneath this, most fundamental of all, a rage that had been smoldering in him almost from the beginning—rage at being thrust into a battle he could neither renounce nor win. At the beginning, there was certainly amazement, wonder, and sometimes joy. There was also, of course, great courage. It was an adventure, an excursion into a new world, the like of which is given to few. But then came the problems, the conflicts, of seeing but not seeing, not being able to make a visual world, and at the same time being forced to give up his native competence—a torment from which no escape seemed possible. But then, paradoxically, a release was given, in the form of a second and now final blindness—a blindness he received as a gift. Now, at last, Virgil is allowed to not see, allowed to escape from the glaring, confusing world of sight and space, and to return to his own true being, the touch world that has been his home for almost fifty years. ♦

ANNIVERSARY

A FESTIVAL FOR MR. B.

BY BERNARD TAPER

IN the programs, he was listed along with Jerome Robbins and John Taras simply as Ballet Master. The listing was alphabetical, so if you were an utter innocent you could believe, scanning the program, that someone named George Balanchine came first in that particular list because his name happened to begin with a "B," and that being a "ballet master," whatever that might mean, was all that he did. Yes, and Joseph Stalin was only the Communist Party's secretary. Balanchine once said to me when we talked about his title, "What's wrong with 'ballet master'? God doesn't have to call himself God, does he?"

L'état, c'est moi. The New York City Ballet was his company, his empire, his world, his life. And, yes, his harem. When Suzanne Farrell left to marry, carried off by her young swain Paul Mejia, it was like "The Abduction from the Seraglio"—except that Pasha Balanchine was not as instantly gracious as Mozart's Pasha Selim. The real-life opera's happy ending of reconciliation and acceptance took five years to get staged.

Like Lao-tzu, Balanchine believed in the absolute necessity of what is of no use. To that proposition he dedicated his peculiar genius. In the world of fantasy that is ballet, he was the supreme realist, the most practical of fantasists: "My muse must come to me on union time." He met his deadlines, worked with astonishing speed, took his often frugal budgets seriously, could not be derailed by unexpected obstacles. An artist of the highest standards, he was also a master of the art of getting the job done.

Over the years, I watched him choreograph twenty-nine ballets. Watching him work, as I've written in my biography of him, was always a revelation—a continuing demonstration of the paradisaical promise that chaos could be mastered, a world made orderly, and that order and beauty could be one. Masterworks galore resulted from his efforts, but he always treated transcendence as happy accident. "If you set out deliberately to make a masterpiece," he once said, "how will you ever get it finished?" And anyway, he would also claim, he wasn't in the business of making masterpieces. All his life, he would say, he had been a man of the theatre, and the business of such a person was providing entertainment. "Yes," he would repeat, relishing each Russian-flavored syllable, "en-ter-tain-ment."

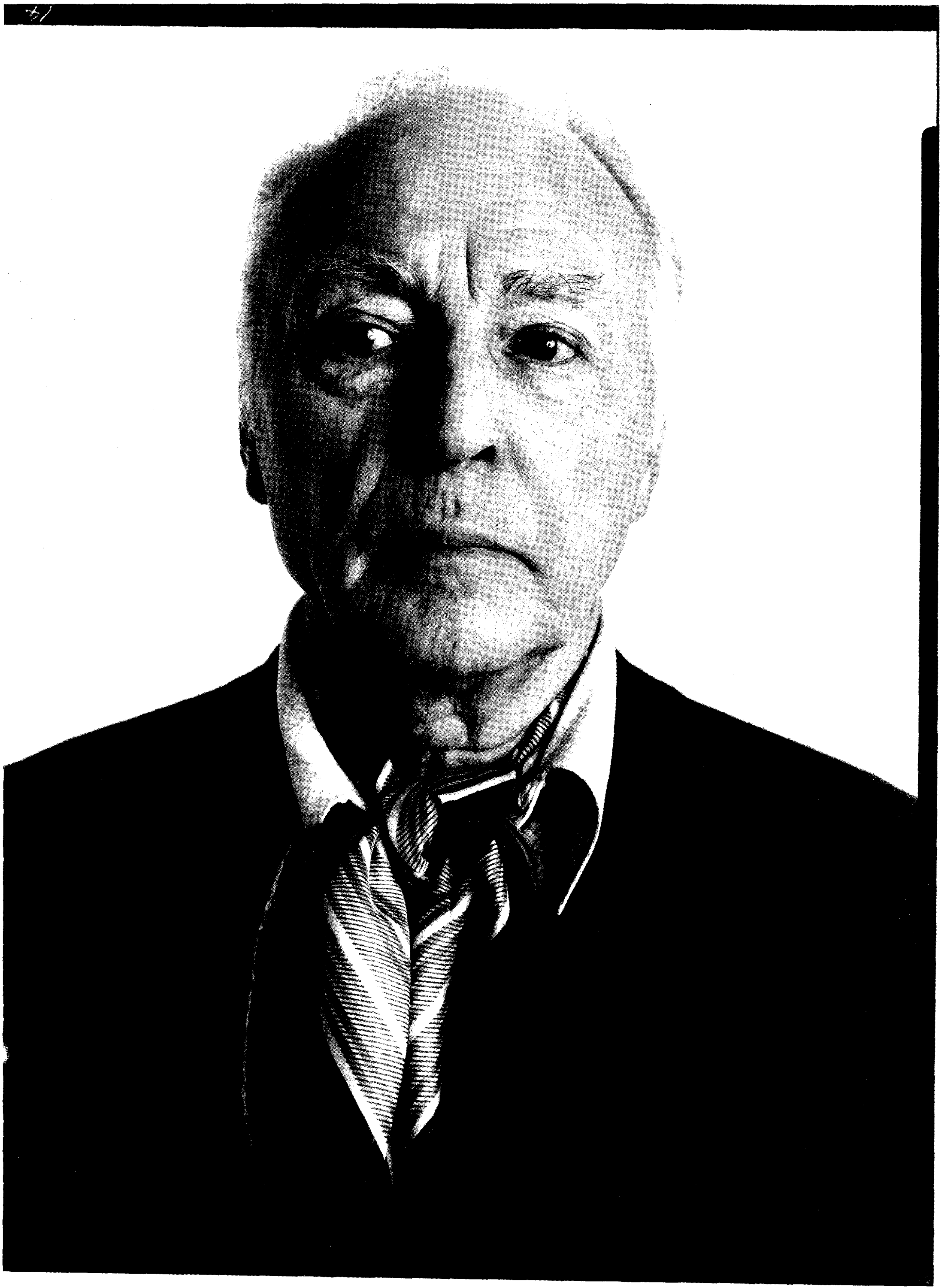
DANCE is the most ephemeral of the arts. One of the amazing achievements of Balanchine's extraordinary life is that he, with the help of his prophet Lincoln Kirstein and a handful of devoted adherents, found a way to institutionalize the manufacture of these miraculous ephemera, these somehow meaningful soap bubbles. And that meant establishing a school to supply the world-class dancers it would be his delight to challenge, so that they, in turn, could challenge him. It also meant training an audience that would learn how to look at what was being put before its eyes and accept the experiments that failed as well as the ones that worked. Thus Balanchine managed to achieve what Diaghilev never could—security and continuity.

John Martin, the former dance critic of the *Times*, once wrote, "Nowhere else in the world is there a ballet company that is similarly the creation of a single mind." Like a chief executive officer, Balanchine had the ultimate power to say yes or no on any question. Indeed, as I think about all the infrastructure Balanchine had to put in place and maintain just so he could make his dances, I find myself wondering whether there has ever been anyone in the history of any of the arts who had to take on quite so much. Names come to mind—Molière as author, actor, director of his company; Brecht and his Berliner Ensemble; Wagner at Bayreuth; Ingmar Bergman as scriptwriter, director, and assembler of his stock film company—but none of these people operated under the imperatives that Balanchine did or with the scope of his powers and concerns.

Some of this has to do with ballet's being fundamentally an illiterate art. "I'm not one of those people who can create in the abstract, in some nice quiet room at home," Balanchine once said to me. "If I didn't have a studio to go to, with dancers waiting for me to give them something to do, I would forget I was a choreographer." In order to make his ballets, he *had* to make his company, and in order to make his company he *had* to make his school. It's as if in order for Verdi to be able to write "La Traviata" he would have had to establish and prudently manage La Scala as well as to offer daily vocal lessons for the company's singers.

ALL real ballets, Auden wrote, take place in an eternal present. So, it seemed, did Balanchine's life. More than anyone else I've known, he paid heed to the moment, fulfilling its obligations and savoring its rewards. I've watched him choose just the right cucumber from a vegetable stand with the calm purposefulness with which he also chose the right steps for his dancers. But his art could not make real time stand still. To encounter once beautiful dancers in their decline gave him pain. And, of course, he hated growing old himself. It's possible, one of his physicians recently speculated, that he contracted the mysterious neurological illness that killed him from rejuvenation injections he had at one time taken in Switzerland.

Balanchine died on April 30th in 1983—a good day to die, his priest said, since it is the day that the Russian Orthodox Church observes the resurrection of Lazarus. Obdurately, he refused to the end to name a successor or to express any desire to have his ballets preserved or his company continue. Without him, he believed, it could never be the same. So I have to doubt that, however wonderful it may be, the extraordinary celebration of his work being launched this week by the New York City Ballet would bring him unalloyed satisfaction. What he said, late in life, was "*Après moi, le Board.*" ♦



George Balanchine, photographed by Richard Avedon in New York City, December 6, 1976.

LETTER FROM MOSCOW

YELTSIN'S TIGHTROPE

His striking popular mandate in the recent referendum suggests that Boris Yeltsin's antic political performance is helping him hang on to the Presidency. But how much will he have to concede to the nationalists and the Communists who restlessly mourn the days of empire and superpowerdom?

BY DAVID REMNICK

RUSSIAN politics is a hybrid of the apocalyptic and the absurd. Every looming congress or referendum promises Armageddon; in time, the event usually turns out to be hopelessly muddled and bizarre, prelude to yet another act. Boris Yeltsin thrives on politics as melodrama. In this way, he is more Russian than his fallen rival, Mikhail Gorbachev. Yeltsin is *nash muzhik*—"our guy"—and his aptitude for burlesque is in no way his downfall but, rather, his frequent salvation. In the face of economic collapse, Russian voters proclaimed their affection for him with a sweeping vote of confidence in a referendum held on April 25th. This bear dances best on a tightrope.

At the last session of the Congress of People's Deputies, in March, Yeltsin gave a strange, rambling speech defying the calls for his resignation or impeachment. His face was puffy and clenched, his white hair flopped boyishly over his eyes. His baritone dipped toward the basso, and he slurred the grace notes. Yeltsin's enemies, the Communists and the hard-line nationalists, who dominate the Congress and desire his swiftest defenestration, not only were convinced that the Russian President had been drinking but said so—and loudly—from the floor of the legislature.

After Yeltsin left the chamber, a diminutive journalist from the Moscow daily *Kuranty* looked up at his President and said, "Uh . . . er . . . Boris Nikolayevich, have you, uh, been drinking?"

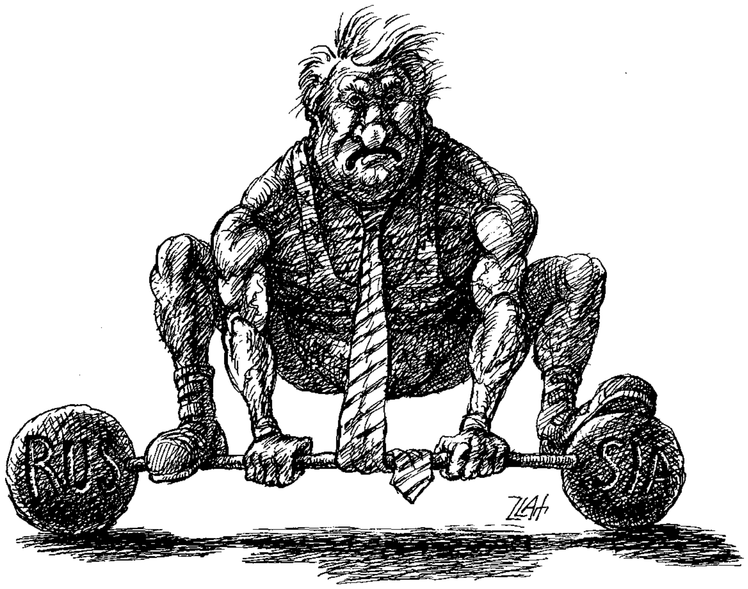
Yeltsin stopped in his tracks and peered down at the little man.

"Smell my breath!" he said.

And with that the leader of the largest landmass on the globe exhaled into the face of the Fourth Estate.

"Well?" Yeltsin said.

The *Kuranty* reporter allowed that the air expelled did not noticeably reek of vodka or any of the President's other preferred spirits. The public took all this with a nod and a wink. In the past, Yeltsin had certainly indulged in more than just a dram of the good stuff. At a speaking engagement at Johns Hopkins University, in 1989, he was clearly in his cups. The Communist leadership ordered a tape of this shown on national television—a tactic that backfired, because the public felt more rage at Gorbachev's naked power play than at Yeltsin's reeling performance. One leading Russian journalist described for me not long ago a drinking party after a meeting of the Presidents of the Commonwealth of Independent States at which Yeltsin had to be yanked from his chair and guided to his waiting jet plane.



A deep feeling of national loss and anxiety, as much as the failing economy, is a lethal weapon in the hands of Yeltsin's political opponents.

Just as the French do not mind infidelity in their leaders, the Russians seem to relish the occasional drinking bouts of Yeltsin—or, at least, rumors of same. After the March Congress, Yeltsin explained that if he seemed a bit discombobulated it was hardly surprising: he had not slept in three days and his mother had just died. Everyone smiled and understood.

OUTSIDERS have long assumed that the Russians have always had the leadership they deserved. The condescension is eternal. Bertrand Russell once tried to explain to Lady Ottoline Morrell why he thought the despotism of the Bolsheviks was, sadly, a fitting turn of history. "If you ask yourself how Dostoyevski's characters should be governed, you will understand," Lord Russell said.

Russia today is not much more fortunate. After the sudden fall of the Bolshevik regime, at a historical moment ripe for either advance or disaster, Boris Yeltsin is the best leader available. His potential betters are either too young or too little known to take power soon. Consider, by contrast, the fortunes of America during its era of emergence. The colonies were blessed with an abundance of Enlightenment thinkers and politicians. Jefferson, Madison, Washington, Adams, and the rest shaped a political ethos and a Constitution that now seem far beyond our deserving.

In last week's referendum, Russian voters cast their ballots in favor of new legislative elections, and Yeltsin, too,

MIKHAIL ZLATKOVSKY

may face reëlection within a year or so. Such a race would promise much in the apocalypse-and-comedy department, and the top contender is the Afghan War hero Aleksandr Rutskoi, Yeltsin's own Vice-President. Rutskoi is a dim bulb with a curious idea of loyalty, but he is appreciated for his daring during the battle against the coup in August of 1991 and for his relatively modest rhetoric. As President, he would probably scale back considerably on radical economic reform; exert political, and even military, pressure on the other former republics of the Soviet Union; and take a far less pro-American line in foreign policy. Other potential rivals include Anatoly Lukyanov, a self-described warrior against the "neo-bourgeoisie," who is currently on trial for his alleged role in the failed coup d'état; Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the neo-Fascist leader of the Liberal Democratic Party; and Aleksandr Sterligov, a former K.G.B. general and now a leader of the Russian National Assembly—a scary alliance of Red-Browns, Communist ideologues, and believers in the restoration of Great Russia. More contenders are surely on their way.

The opposition to Yeltsin, in general, is rooted in one form or another of mythic nostalgia: Communist nostalgia for the order of Stalin and the supposedly dependable standard of living under Brezhnev; military nostalgia for the fear that the Soviet arsenal once aroused in the heart of the Western enemy; nationalist nostalgia for empire and higher spiritual purpose. It is natural that nostalgia should be such a powerful force of politics in Russia now, just as it became for the Ottoman Turks and the British as they lost their hold on the earth. Empires are not lost merrily. Their mourning is both an aesthetic response and a form of politics. Enoch Powell was driven to fits of poetry over the loss of India, and even today "neo-Ottomanism" is a powerful force in Turkish politics.

For tens of millions of Russians, the story of their country since Gorbachev's advent, in 1985, has been one of unremitting loss and injured pride. What took decades for the citizens of Constantinople and London to absorb struck the Russians in an instant: the empire—Russian greatness—had vanished. That the economy has been dying is obvious to any Western visitor. Less obvious is the Russian's anxiety about his place in the world. The jewels of the empire are lost: the beaches of the Crimea, the vineyards of Moldova, the oil fields of Kazakhstan, the port of Odessa—to say nothing of Prague, Budapest, and Warsaw—are all parts of foreign lands now. The Army is fraught with draft dodging and dissolution.

The old joke among Western cynics that the Soviet Union was little more than Upper Volta with missiles now turns out to be the grudging conclusion of most Russians. Yuri Levada, a leading sociologist in Moscow, recently published a poll in the daily newspaper *Izvestia* showing that only eleven per cent of the population believes that Russia is still a great power, with two-thirds of the respondents saying that the country should regain its lost prestige on the world stage. Between those two statistics is a deep longing—a feeling of national loss and anxiety. And that longing, as much as the failing economy, is a lethal weapon in the hands of Yeltsin's political opponents. While Yeltsin and his Western-oriented supporters are trying to create, simultaneously, a market economy, a democratic political system, and a civil society, his opponents, more often than not, indulge in a politics of loss—a new sort of populism.

Many influential liberals in politics, such as Yeltsin's former adviser Galina Starovoitova, feel that Russia's economic failure and wounded self-esteem are so profound and combustible that the advent of a charismatic authoritarian movement in Russia cannot be ruled out. "One cannot exclude the possibility of a Fascist period in Russia," Starovoitova said on the radio station Echo of Moscow. "We can see too many parallels between Russia's current situation and that of Germany after the Versailles Treaty. A great nation is humiliated, and many of its nationals live outside the country's borders. The disintegration of an empire has taken place at a time when many people still have an imperialist outlook. . . . All this is happening at a time of economic crisis."

In the West, and among most educated people in Russia, it is generally understood that the pain Russians are now enduring—the economic collapse, the political deadlock, the ecological time bombs—is for the most part the legacy, the falling bricks, of a toppled regime that held its subjects in contempt and regarded the ways of the outside world with total suspicion. Even under the best of circumstances, the job of moving Russia into the modern world, of bringing some stability to its economy and creating a normal political system, will take many years. The leaders of the growing alliance of former Communist Party chieftains and Great Russian nationalists, however, put all blame on those who did the most to bring down the Bolshevik regime. In Moscow, one need only leaf through a stack of newspapers and journals, as I did recently, to hear the voices of fury and nostalgia in full throat.

"We have destroyed all our foundations of human morals, we have destroyed Great Russia," Boris Govorin, a top government official in the Siberian city of Irkutsk, tells the newspaper *Russki Vostok* (*Russian East*).

The nationalist journalist Aleksandr Kazintsev writes, "Look at the great Russian people. In the past, the mere mention of their name used to destroy the walls of impregnable fortresses. Now they are defeated by Lilliputians."

Anatoly Lukyanov tells the ultranationalist newspaper *Dyen* (*Day*), "The democrats have carried out an experiment on our people that proved even more brutal than that of Bolshevism. But the people will realize that they are being led toward a criminal society more terrible than totalitarianism and then the decline in political activity, the apathy, will disappear."

And Aleksandr Sterligov writes, "Russian nationalism in Russia's component republics, territories, and regions is still in the early stages. But in a year or two it will grow into a considerable force. It will become even stronger as the reformers continue their anti-Russian reforms."

In the rhetoric of the Red-Brown opposition, Russia is now an occupied country controlled by a "treasonous" government that takes its orders from the White House, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. For some, the list extends to "the Judeo-Masonic conspiracy."

One afternoon last month, I met Sergei Kovalyov, the head of the parliament's Human Rights Committee and a protégé of Andrei Sakharov, at the Russian White House. Kovalyov is despised by the Communists and the nationalists alike.

"What is happening now is an extension of the old feeling about the rest of the world that 'they may not love us but they fear us,'" Kovalyov said. "But now we are not terribly feared. We are a Third World country, and everyone knows it. And this knowledge brings on terrible psychological pain, not merely because of the poverty involved but also as a matter of pride. Suddenly, Russians have to see where they really stand in the world. And it is awful, and so they try to imagine a great past and make of it a new politics."

MADAME THEBES

That awful otherness of the world.
Some days,
Everything looks unfamiliar
On my street.
It's somebody else's life I'm living.

An immaculate silent order,
Of white buildings and dark clouds,
And then the open door
In a house with lowered voices.
Someone left in a hurry,
And they're waiting for me to come in
With a lit match.

There's a rustle of a long skirt
But when I enter
It's only the evening papers
Sliding off the table
Birdlike
In a large and obviously drafty
And now altogether empty room.

—Charles Simic

OF the various forms of nostalgia at work in Moscow now, the most puzzling is the yearning, especially among older people, for a repetition of the immediate past—the Communist experience. I went to a show at the Manezh exhibition hall, near the Kremlin, of the paintings of Dmitri Nalbandyan, one of the last living specimens of Kremlin artist. A winner of the Lenin Prize and a Hero of Socialist Labor for his portraits of the Soviet leaders, Nalbandyan is one of many lackeys whose great misfortune it is to have lived long enough to witness the indignity of the regime's collapse and the complete discrediting of the state-demanded aesthetic. The exhibition catalogue is without irony, but it seemed to me that of the few people who had bothered to come see the paintings at least half were making derisive remarks. They were there to look at the relics of the old regime, the pitifully rendered artifacts that had decorated the halls of Soviet power.

A Russian friend and I walked, half stupefied, past these creations: "The Dance of the Collective Farmers in Armenia," "Portrait of Stalin," "Lenin, Gorky in 1920," "The Sea of Youth."

A few days later, I went to see Nalbandyan, who has an enormous studio on what was once Gorky Street and is now, in the rush of post-Soviet renaming, Tver Street. I was greeted at the door by an irascible man of eighty-six, and soon found that his conversation consisted of moments of lucidity often interrupted by angry or sentimental meanderings. I asked him about his sessions with Stalin.

"Stalin didn't like to sit for his portrait painters, but he sat for me," he said. "For forty, forty-five minutes! When Stalin saw what I had done, I was immediately named master of the first rank. In those days, this was a tremendous achievement. They printed millions of copies of my portrait of Stalin. When people came to see Stalin, he would point out the portrait and say, 'It was young Nalbandyan who did this.'

"God knows what's written about Stalin now, but he appealed to me as a man and in his appearance. He had a beautiful face and the eyes of a wise man. You could see how smart he was just by looking at those eyes. Churchill once wrote—I think it was Churchill—that even Roosevelt, a cripple, would stand when Stalin came in the room. Stalin was an iron man. They blame Stalin for everything now, and it's all wrong! People ask me why I painted Stalin so grandly when he had pox and a withered arm. Well, what of it! Was Reagan so beautiful? I saw the man and he wasn't so good-looking.

"I painted portraits of all the men, and I loved them. Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev. I tried to talk to Khrushchev about French literature, about André Gide, but Khrushchev wasn't interested. Brezhnev—now, there was an intelligent man.

"People love me as an artist. They are all so stunned that I work so hard and produce so much. I am a realist. Even Picasso was a realist, you know. I visited Picasso in Spain, and he told me that he wasn't really interested in Cubism at all, that it was all a bunch of nonsense for the critics. Picasso told me he was a realist. And he was a Jew, you know. Picasso was a Jew."

I had not said much, and when Nalbandyan began describing his belief in flying saucers I decided that it was probably time to go. A few weeks later, I called Vitaly Komar, a brilliant artist who now lives in New York and, in partnership with Aleksandr Melamid, has made a career of twisting official Soviet art into an art of irony and protest. I asked Komar where Nalbandyan fitted in the pantheon of the great Socialist Realists.

"Nalbandyan is the master of the universe in painting military boots," he said. "When I look at his portrait of Stalin, I can practically smell the boots. They gleam! They radiate!"

NALBANDYAN in his dotage may yet serve as an adequate symbol of the Communists. I am convinced that they have no future. Nevertheless, the new Communist parties, led by former apparatchiks at all levels, have quickly formulated a conspiratorial version of recent history that has wide currency among the opposition generally. According to leaders of the failed coup in 1991, the real coup was devised by Gorbachev and Yeltsin with help from "foreign agents" in the West. "Many people started out believing that the 'democrats' were those people who would be able to improve the standard of living and the existing Soviet power," the former Defense Minister Dmitri Yazov, who helped lead the coup, told the newspaper *Sovetskaya Rossiya*. "Then it became clear that their secret goal was the restoration of capitalism. From the other side, it is well known that already by 1963, under the leadership of Kennedy, there was a plan worked out to weaken Soviet power from the inside."

"Have you ever done golf?"

• •

Vladimir Kryuchkov, the former K.G.B. chief, has hatched a conspiracy theory worthy, in its ingenious specificity, of a cheap Cold War thriller. In an article headlined "THE AMBASSADOR OF TROUBLE" and published in *Sovetskaya Rossiya* last February, Kryuchkov wrote that while he was head of the secret police he compiled documentary evidence that Gorbachev's closest, and most liberal, adviser, Aleksandr Yakovlev, was an "agent of influence" recruited by the Central Intelligence Agency and working for Washington ever since he was an exchange student at Columbia University, in 1958-59. Kryuchkov has also claimed that he gave Gorbachev a file on the matter but the material was rejected. Since the article appeared, nearly all the other coup plotters have echoed the Yakovlev conspiracy theory. ("They should put up monuments to Yakovlev at the Pentagon and Langley," Yazov told *Sovetskaya Rossiya*.)

Yakovlev was indeed considered, along with Eduard Shevardnadze, to be the most reliable liberal in the leadership during the Gorbachev years. As Party ideologist, he was godfather to the pro-reform editors at such publications as *Moscow News* and *Ogonyok;* as a foreign-policy adviser, he strongly urged demilitarization and an end to the confrontation with the West; and, as a domestic-policy adviser, he often supported the pro-sovereignty movements in the republics and the movement for market reforms. By 1989, Yakovlev was speaking out publicly about the failure of Marxism-Leninism and the cruelty of the Bolshevik regime. Yakovlev and Gorbachev have dismissed the C.I.A.-conspiracy theory—and so have the leading law-enforcement officials of Russia—but the indicted coup plotters, it seems, are willing to grasp at anything that would erase their own failures. Like nearly all criminals, they are loath to admit to their own guilt.

A few days before the trial of the coup leaders began, on April 14th, I went to see Gennady Yanayev, who had been Gorbachev's ineffectual Vice-President and then the nerve-shot figurehead of the August coup. I would have preferred to see Kryuchkov, the key leader of the Keystone Cops operation, but I was unwilling to pay the thousand dollars he was asking. (What a marvellous arc of progress the Bolsheviks have travelled! They set out in the name of proletarian salvation and have ended up under arrest and shaking down Western reporters for a thousand dollars. For some reason, Yanayev came free.)

Yanayev lives in one of the fancy apartment buildings behind the Foreign Ministry. His neighbors include Gary Kasparov, the world chess champion, and Andrei Kozyrev, the current Foreign Minister. Yanayev opened the door and wearily led me into his living room. In the three days of the coup, Yanayev was, according to people who met and talked with him, drinking to the point of incoherence. At a press conference of the plotters, his hands shook comically as he tried to explain to the world that the assembled leaders would bring their "friend" Gorbachev back from Foros to Moscow as soon as "he feels better." Now Yanayev seemed more confident. He had a line to sell.

"Gorbachev knew everything about the feelings of the leadership, and about the approach we wanted to take to lead the country out of the crisis," he began. "More than once, these issues were discussed in his presence. Both early in 1991 and then on April 12, 1991, Gorbachev gave instructions to the government to design different emergency decrees: a general-state-of-emergency decree; a decree for a state of emergency in certain regions; one for Presidential rule; and one for Presidential rule in various regions.

"But Gorbachev will betray everything to keep himself afloat," Yanayev went on. "The animal hatred between Gorbachev and Yeltsin was the subjective factor that played such an evil trick on the country. I believe Gorbachev would have loved to get rid of Yeltsin, using the hands of others. In every way, he pushed us, the emergency committee, in this direction.

"Essentially, what was happening was the realization of the plan of Yeltsin and company—in other words, we don't need the union, only a commonwealth of independent states," Yanayev said. "That is what we have now. Naturally, when we saw this, we understood that without steps to prevent it the disintegration of the union was inevitable.

"In those conditions, Gorbachev was offered the option of a state of emergency. He said, 'I won't do it myself.' We already knew Gorbachev's character. As soon as there is an acute situation in the country, he tries to run away from it. He did that during the conflicts in Baku, Tbilisi, and Vilnius, and when there were troops in Moscow in March of 1991. Gorbachev was always 'uninvolved.' We were always covering for him to preserve his democratic image. And during the three days of the coup we did the same. This was our mistake. We believed that we were pursuing Gorbachev's policies.

"Gorbachev could have prevented the August events, but he didn't want to. He could just simply have said after talking with the comrades, 'Come to Moscow and let's see what is going on. Let's think it over.' If there is trouble at a factory, the director goes and sees what's going on. But Gorbachev did nothing of the kind. He sat and waited it out. He thought, If the State of Emergency Committee wins, I'm in no danger—I'll come out and continue as President—and if the democrats win I'll make peace with the democrats, preserve power, and continue work as if nothing had happened.

"My biggest mistake personally was that I believed in Gorbachev up to the last day of the August events. I trusted him. I believed that he would be with us and join us. This faith that he would be with us determined the scenario of events.

"I had made a dramatic decision. And I realized that no matter how things turned out I was a kamikaze. I would lose. But I wanted to do something for the country. I thought about that, and not about myself or my relatives. I believed that it was my constitutional duty to defend the state regime. The prosecutor calls it a state coup, but if that is so it was a really unique coup, unprecedented in that it was a coup aimed at defending the existing regime and carried out by the top leadership against a criminally inactive President."

Yanayev's mostly preposterous version of events is the core of the defense position in the coup trial—a trial that promises to go on, by fits and starts, for many months. The plotters will contend that they were acting with Gorbachev's tacit approval and in the interests of saving an endangered state. The prosecution will tell the military tribunal that the plotters imposed their will on the President and endangered the state by ordering troops into Moscow. Even Yeltsin has testified in a deposition that Gorbachev showed no sign of supporting the plotters.

Before leaving, I asked Yanayev about reports that he had been drinking heavily from the beginning of the coup until his arrest in the Kremlin, four days later.

He admitted that just before getting the call to come help lead the coup he had been visiting an old friend and they had, "of course," had a drink or two. But no more. "I have this quality, when I have just one drink my face goes red," he said. "That is how my capillaries are. And that is when the calls to come to the Kremlin began. As for their saying I was drunk—well, this is like the pot calling the kettle black. If anyone was drinking, it was the Russian leadership. They were carousing pretty good over there at the White House."

"Sorry, but I'm still finding it hard to accept gut responses from women."

IT is hard to imagine Russians rallying around the nostalgic politics of Gennady Yanayev or the aesthetics of Dmitri Nalbandyan. The small crowds of angry pensioners who dominate pro-Communist marches do not seem all that threatening, either. And yet at the moment Russian politics is so confused, such a mess, that the new Russian Communist Party—the old Soviet organization was outlawed by the Constitutional Court in November of 1992—is the biggest party in the country. Gennady Zyuganov, who supported the August coup and now leads the new Russian version of the Party, claims over half a million members. Even outsiders say that by early next year it may have nearly two million, which would make it by far the biggest political party in Russia. Yeltsin, for his part, considers his failure to create a pro-reform party one of his biggest mistakes. In the past year, there have been numerous joint manifestos issued and congresses assembled, all intended to block Yeltsin's radical reforms; the strength of the Communists' new party is apparent only when it combines with the various Russian nationalist tendencies.

Nearly all Russian nationalists believe in a mythical golden age, and have reached into the past to revive the ideas of an array of theorists and philosophers who rejected a Russian unification with Europe. Suddenly, right-wing papers are filled not with Communist ideology but with the "Eurasianism" of George Vernadsky, the émigré who argued that the Slavs were a unique race, neither European nor Asian. There is renewed talk of Moscow as the "Third Rome"—an answer to the bestial commercialism of the West. There are endless attacks on the degradation of Russian culture by the "Coca-Colonization" of Russian television, radio, and advertising. There is increasing interest in poets, historians, and philosophers who celebrated the czarist Russian empire. Aleksandr Prokhanov, the editor of *Dyen* and an imperialist belletrist, has come to be known as Russia's Rudyard Kipling.

Many of the Russian nationalist publications reveal a hatred for non-Russians. Anti-Semitism is an essential element of the passionate rhetoric of many nationalist "thinkers," but so is sentiment against nearly all non-Russians, as threatening the national gene pool. There are precedents for this phenomenon, too. When hope of reëstablishing an empire fades, concern for domestic purity becomes an obsession: the British railing against the "wogs" of India, the French warding off the immigration from Algeria. Russian right-wing papers regularly run admiring articles on hard-line nationalists abroad, including Jean-Marie Le Pen, of the French National Front, and even, amazingly, the German Republicans.

One afternoon, I visited Konstantin Samarin, who is a leader of a Russian nobility league, a neo-monarchist group that has its headquarters in a restored monastery around the corner from the Kremlin. Samarin is scruffy, and casual in his bearing; he has none of the restored pomposity of some of the other princes around town who have discovered the value of their family names. Samarin's forebears were religious and military leaders as far back as the thirteenth century.

"A restored monarchy is a utopia, we realize that," Samarin said. "But if there were a referendum and the people decided they wanted a czar, then fine." Under his monarchist cloak, Samarin embodies one form of an essential movement in Russia—the *gosudarstvenniki*, or statists. The real issue, he said, was the strength of the Russian state: there was a need to regain lands lost in the breakup of the Soviet Union and the millions of Russians who are now "lost" in Estonia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and elsewhere.

"Russia is a special country, a buffer between Europe and Asia," Samarin said. "We give credit to Yeltsin for helping to smash the Communist regime. But he's a Westernizer. He doesn't take into account the specificity, the special place of Russia. Russia joins the two kinds of thought and behavior in the world: the passivity and spirituality of the East and the dynamism and rationality of the West. Russia is the balancing act in all this, and Yeltsin does not understand that."

As I was leaving, I picked up from the office downstairs a leaflet that Samarin's group had been handing out. It supported Aleksandr Sterligov, the former K.G.B. general and hard-line statist. Clearly, Samarin had been selling me, the foreign visitor, a soft-line version of his nationalism. To judge by the leaflet, his heart was filled with sterner stuff.

EVEN if Yeltsin remains a popular President, the influence of a nationalist opposition and nationalist sentiment is bound to influence his thinking and his policies. It has already done so. Yeltsin backed off returning at least two of four Kurile Islands to Japan for fear of arousing the hatred of the statists. And his unwillingness to advocate foreign intervention in Bosnia is an outright concession to the nationalists, who favor their Orthodox brethren the Serbs.

There are still some politicians in the government and in parliament—such as Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and the legislators Anatoly Shabad and Sergei Kovalyov—who are repelled by the nationalist revival and even warn of a turn toward neo-Fascism. But Kozyrev, especially, has been so tarred by the nationalists that even Yeltsin has to keep him at arm's length. Politicians who were once key figures in the radical democratic opposition to Gorbachev are now careful to give a nationalist shading to their public pronouncements.

One afternoon, I went to see Sergei Stankevich, an adviser to Yeltsin, whom I first met when he was running for a seat in the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies, in 1989. In those days, Stankevich established himself as one of the brightest young allies of the opposition. Now he was writing articles in the press in which he quoted Ivan Ilyin and other Russian nationalists from the nineteen-twenties and made the argument that Russia would, after all, carve out a "third way" of development, neither capitalist nor socialist.

Stankevich's office, in the Kremlin, is vast and shadowy. He has a paunch now, and there were bags under his eyes. In fact, he looked miserable, and admitted that disagreements between him and Yeltsin had grown so sharp at times that he almost resigned. I asked him how he looked at the current state of affairs and the deadlock that was the plague of Moscow politics.

"The process of change went through three phases," Stankevich said. "The first began with the rise of Gorbachev, in 1985—a time of liberal Communists of the sixties generation, who sought to preserve the old system and modernize it. They wanted to introduce only some elements of democracy—a limited free press called *glasnost*, and limited free elections, which resulted in the Congress of People's Deputies. They wanted to prolong the life of the system and prevent alienation between the people and the state. Gorbachev accomplished this to a great extent and made his major contribution, but he failed to keep pace with the second wave.

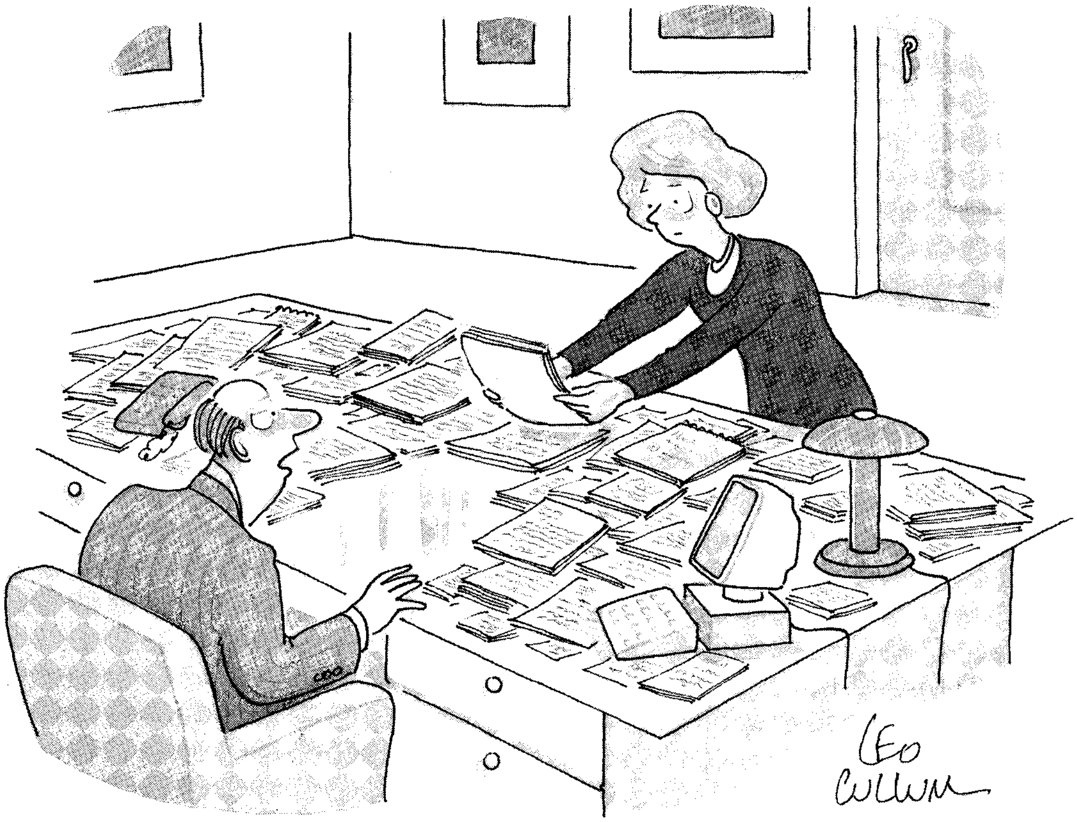
"The second wave began, I'd say, with the elections in 1989, which helped sweep away Communist ideology and established a desire for real, not limited, democratic institutions. A real constitution, a real legislature, real elections—these were the new values. The coalition supporting them was built around Yeltsin and Andrei Sakharov, who was in his last year of life, and around the Inter-Regional Group of radical deputies, the Baltic leaders, and so on. The high point of that phase came with the unexpected August coup and its complete collapse—a collapse that led to the eradication of the Communist Party and of the state's total control of the economy. But that victory turned out to be a mixed blessing. We had reached a distant shore long before we thought we ever would.

"The third phase had begun and we were not really ready. We democrats who had been in opposition were suddenly in power, and in many ways we were not prepared. The main weakness was that the idea of what a 'new Russia' should be had not been considered at all. We had to create at least a minimal consensus on the general future of Russia, and so far we've been unable to do that. Also, we are in this terrible deadlock between Yeltsin's government and the old parliament. I don't think we'll get anywhere—the third phase won't really begin—until there are new elections on all sides."

Stankevich made no excuses for the nationalism in his recent articles and speeches. "As politicians, we can't afford to think as we once did—as radicals, as opponents," he said. "We are now in power, and we have to reorganize a gigantic country, of a hundred and fifty million people, all with their own views and interests. We must democratically represent the interests of these people—some of whom think as nationalists—and not only the interests of our friends in Washington.

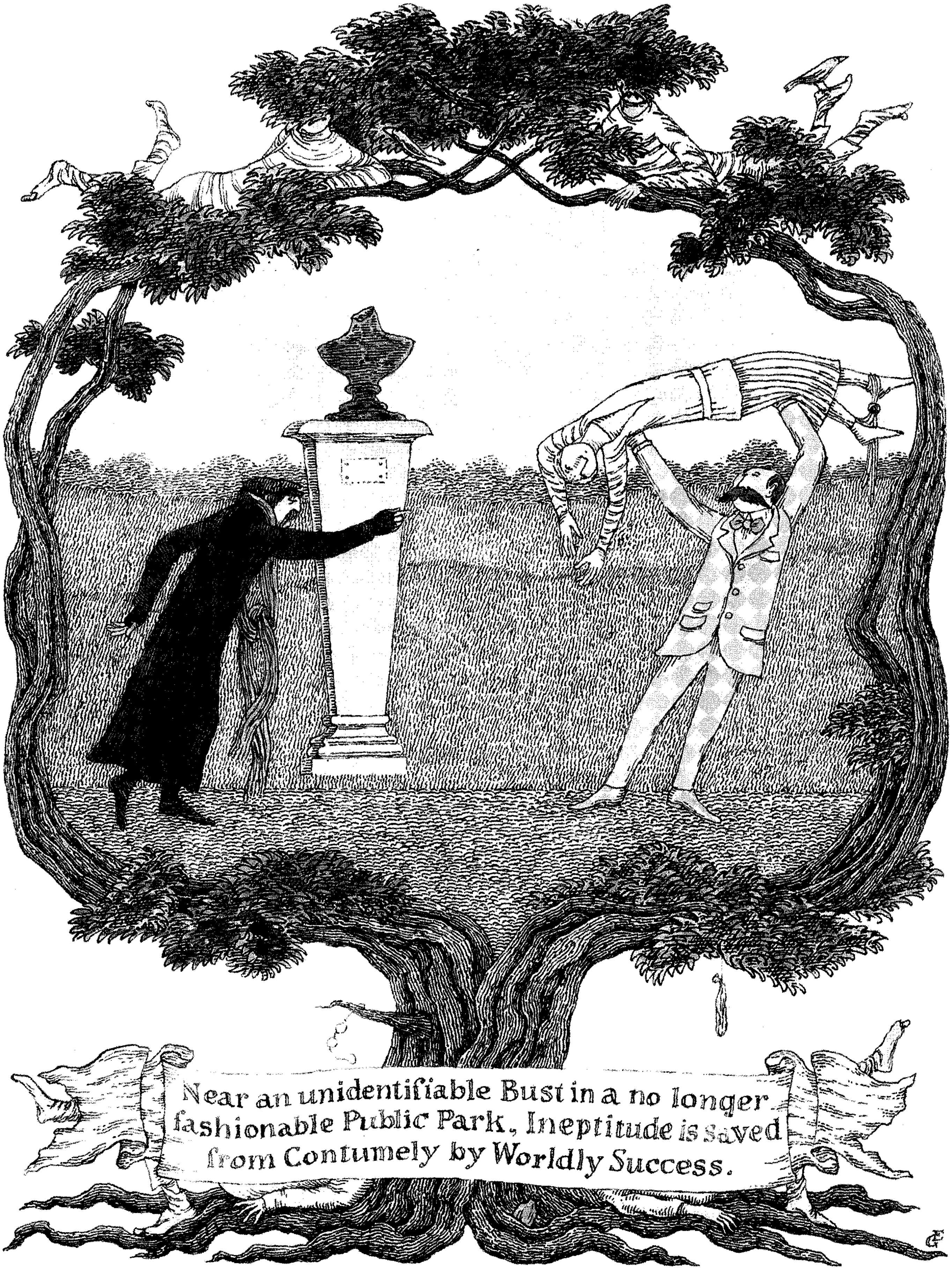
"Of course, there is a nostalgia now for the old Russia or the old Soviet empire. But the attempt to invent a specific model should not be interpreted as a reactionary dream. To the contrary, the idea that we can Westernize Russia in three or four years, that we'll be able to travel from Chicago to St. Petersburg and see no difference, is absolutely absurd. I have nothing against the West or Western goods. I have nothing against good hotels or American breakfasts. And from time to time I'll even visit McDonald's here, because, basically, McDonald's was a first window on Western commercialism for many of our people. But we must differentiate between Russia and the West. The United States and France are different culturally, but they are greatly similar as well. Russia is something else. From the early Middle Ages, Western societies have experienced a steady accretion of rationalism in their psychology and their institutions. There was the Reformation, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment. We had none of this. Look at Holland, the Dutch. This is a highly rational society in which everything is for the most part predictable, orderly, and each person and organization has its own place and behavior. Maybe it is even overrational. But Russia has none of this. Without my getting stereotypical, Russia's psychology is more spontaneous, unpredictable, artistic, more inclined to extremes of endless patience and explosions of license. This doesn't mean there is a Great Wall of China between Russia and the rest of the world. We are closer to Europe than to Asia. But these differences exist. They are not the invention of some romantic journalist. We can still have democracy, elections, a constitution, markets, and the rest, but if we intend to get anywhere we have to recognize our qualities—we have to recognize who we are and where we are starting from."

The best that Russia and the world can hope for is that the most virulent nationalists never get the political support they are campaigning for, and that a civilized debate—one that looks to whatever is tolerant and successful in both Western and Russian thought—prevails in the creation of what is still the largest country on earth. So far, sanity has won out. The debate today in Moscow is often vicious and chilling, but it is worth remembering that in the mid-nineteenth century Westernizers such as Aleksandr Herzen carried on the debate with the Slavophiles not with hatred but with a sense of mutual quest. On the occasion of the death of one of the leading Slavophiles, Konstantin Aksakov, Herzen wrote, "Yes, we were their opponents, but very strange ones. We had the same love but not the same way of loving—and, like Janus or the two-headed eagle, we looked in opposite directions while one heart beat in us all." ♦



"No, not there, please. That's where I'm going to put my head."

BLEMISHED ESCUTCHEONS BY EDWARD GOREY


Near an unidentifiable Bust in a no longer fashionable Public Park, Ineptitude is saved from Contumely by Worldly Success.

FICTION

SAM THE CAT

BY MATTHEW KLAM

WHAT you remember about an old girlfriend is perfect. Even the horrible parts are fine. Especially when you don't have anything else going, the memories of her are lethal. In my office I have an ad from a magazine hanging above the desk. It's of an old girlfriend who is a model, and I've been thinking about her for days. It has been a long time since our paths have crossed, and for that I humbly thank God. But I think if I had her here right now I'd marry her.

All of my girlfriends wore their hair the same way—long and straight, with bangs in the front. They all liked sex, they were all good-looking, they liked the same kind of music I listen to—Rolling Stones, Little Feat, The Who. They all kept up with me, drinkingwise. They all had their own cars.

What was wrong with any of them? Paula was small and dark and depressed and smoked a lot of cigarettes. Sarah was a ski instructor, too full of herself; she pissed in the bed when she drank. Irene had a knowledge of the New Age and did aura paintings and collected herb-tea boxes. Holly's eyes crossed when she got tired. She was chunky and slept twelve hours a night. Boots had an interest in open-air sex but acted lazy and as unimportant as a secretary. I went out with a Japanese girl, Makiko, who threatened to break up with me if I didn't carry a clothes dryer up four flights of stairs to her apartment. And I dated a fashion model named Ann—the one in the picture—who was actually bald because of a rare disease. Was I asking too much? I wanted real love. Where was that loyalty and trust? Where were the laughs? Under a rock? Inside a chocolate-chip cookie?

I wanted real love. Not a replay, not the same thing over and over again, not the same dinners, that same let's rent a video tonight. I wanted love and everything—cut flowers, her wearing a beautiful dress, lingerie, seeing an incredible band, blow jobs in a convertible. Going to Africa for Christmas—you know, the finest champagne, meeting movie stars together, amazing parties with a see-through dance floor. How many times do I have to hear myself explain this?

In the picture above my desk Annie is modelling a leather motorcycle coat without her wig, totally bald. The weird thing is that we went out for almost a year and I never saw her without the wig until I opened the magazine. One time she asked if I wanted to see her with it off, and I said no. See, because her wig was what first attracted me to her. She looked so incredibly hot, dancing in a tank top with this gorgeous long black hair, and what a nasty little surprise when I find out it's somebody else's hair.

I get this feeling looking at the picture of Annie—a warm, sour sensation under my sternum. I know what that feeling is: that I did something wrong, and the reminder of guilt is deep and uncomfortable, but it's more than that. Because when I look at her eyes, staring off the page and looking at me but not seeing, I almost want her back. It's not a joke. I'd do anything to get her back. If she called me on the phone right now I'd drop to my knees and I'd cry.

"Sam," she'd say, "would you be my boy?"

She's just starting to smile in the picture—that amazing wide mouth of hers sliding open, her eyes pointed down like she has a secret. I need her to want me again. Then, once she says I can come over, and later looks up from down there with those big brown eyes that drink you in, I'll want to get out. And I won't want to see her or talk to her or listen to her voice on the phone.

What is that, Sam I am? I ask you: Is it love? Because if it is love, the world needs a little bit less of it.

You know what? I fucked her. She's done, she's dead now, so fly away. I did Ann and her sister and their fat friend. Ann went to Germany on an important assignment. She wrote me postcards from the Hofbräuhaus. I called her friend up on the telephone, we ate pizza and drank and had sex with my pants pulled down on the lawn beside my car.

Hairless and tan, rich and slutty (an agile *penis mechanic*)—for all her unique traits, Ann does not hold a candle to Louise, my most recent girlfriend, the only person in my life I've ever truly loved. Louise seemed to really know me and, despite that, wanted to be with me. But she is party to the situation I am currently avoiding, and so I make do with the perfection of memories. I *know what's going on*—*it's* all a big cycle. I've had a girlfriend since I was in second grade and I'll probably have one until I croak. The problem is, despite my current confusion, which I'm coming to, I love, love women. I like to see them bark for me. That's a joke. I love having a girlfriend. All they ask for is a normal degree of fidelity, and then they'll let you do *whatever you want to them*. Anything. You can have them bent sweetly over the back of the sofa with their gorgeous ass in the air and they won't say a thing, because the truth is everybody digs it and just needs the excuse of love. I get myself into all kinds of trouble, all that rubbing in the dark. Rubbing and rubbing in all those beds next door to a church or over a health-food store or in the back of her mother's house. I bet if you put them end to end, I've rubbed my hand across bare stomachs from here to Estonia and back. They give the word and it's a free-for-all. If I were a girl I'd fuck ten guys a day. I swear. I'd never want to be a girl, though, for they have the worst deal in history.

You are looking at the original hopeless lover. I love it all, the first few phone calls, her hair in a bandanna, getting drunk together the first time, seeing her little underwear. The normal pit in your stomach is replaced by a whirling feeling. Then those beginning-couple weeks together, where you're sort of thinking about it no matter what else you're thinking of. There's no ruminating about what to live for when the alarm goes off before work in the morning. You find a long hair of hers stuck to the sleeve of your suit and you hold it up to the light. For the next ten minutes you are stoned, picturing last night. You take her to a really fancy restaurant for dinner, you go shopping together, you go on double dates, you decide whose house to sleep at. You call her on the phone and then call back—"One more thing . . ." One evening after another is perfect. It's nice. You're her boyfriend now, nobody else calls. She starts to talk rotten about her old boyfriend. You meet her friends, you meet her family, you say what your kids will look like, you think about marrying her.

I love being in love. I'm so in love, I'm so in love. Sometimes I don't even know what I'm in love with. I'm in love with the love drug.

You walk into a supermarket or a restaurant, your girlfriend goes in first and you're looking at her ass. And you say to yourself, "Isn't that the most beautiful ass? That's mine. It's beautiful." Like it's going to save you. An ass isn't going to save you. What's it going to do? Hide you from the police? Call up your boss when you don't feel well?

Interior with White-Liberal Myth

• •

MY girlfriend Louise and I went to a party—mostly advertising people I knew through work. It began late and followed a long day where all I wanted was a simple meal in front of the TV. But I knew I'd hate myself if I missed it. Things happen at parties which your friends talk about for weeks, sometimes for years. You can't miss them. You can't get in on a great joke after the fact.

The party was held in a refurbished warehouse. There was a band in one corner, guys carrying trays of hot hors d'oeuvres, and a cash bar. They had a hateful mime walking through the crowd. I was mad at myself for going, disappointed at the turnout, and pissed that I'd brought Louise, because she didn't know anyone. When people asked about work I explained that the Mafia had hired me to do P.R. I acted like a prick to let them know there were better places to be, but at the same time I was forcing out jokes and clever observations because I wanted everyone to like me. That's why I go to parties. Anyway, people like you better if they think you don't like them.

Louise and I started bumming cigarettes off people. If they said yes we'd ask for four. And then she waved hello to this girl who was heading up to the bar. I couldn't see her well because of how dark it was, but she stood over six feet, with silky, jet-black hair just above her shoulders and hanging around her face. She had on bluejeans and a T-shirt, a tight little athlete's ass, nice knobby shoulders so that she was almost cocky-looking, but very skinny with those sharp hip bones that you can feel right under the bikini. It was too dark to see everything.

I wanted to have a chat with her. "Louisie," I said, "when you go to the bathroom I need you to check my phone messages."

"O.K.," she said, and I handed her some money. She left, I went hustling up to the bar, wangled over to this chick, whipped on my best head fake and grin, and it was a man.

He had some high cheekbones, he wasn't broad, maybe he could be one of those handsome, pretty male models you see in Calvin Klein ads. I don't know—I'm not an expert on how guys look. Yes, right, a basically handsome guy. Up close, though, I saw that he needed a shave. He probably had had sexual relations with Louise some time in the past—that's why he waved.

He was a skinny dude with long hair, that's all. Not a woman.

When Louise came back I told her—not that I went running over there but that when I saw him out of the corner of my eye I thought he was a chick. We screamed. I'm such a turkey sometimes I don't know why the hell girls go out with me. That's the real mystery.

I am a great lover. I've got to give me that. There are only two things about me that females don't like: the fact that I sing when I drive—admittedly, I'm not a musician—and my skiing. All the girls I know ski moguls well—really solid bump skiers—and I try to turn in the swells and lose my downhill line. I have good hair, I've got a good car. My skin, my body—that's all decent. But I get ridiculed on bumps, and the way I sing

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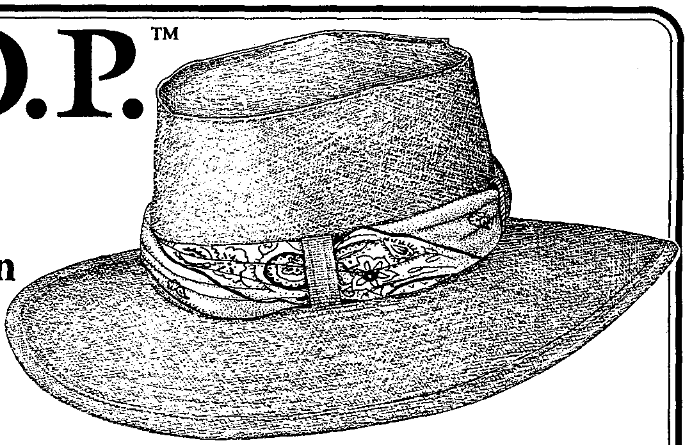

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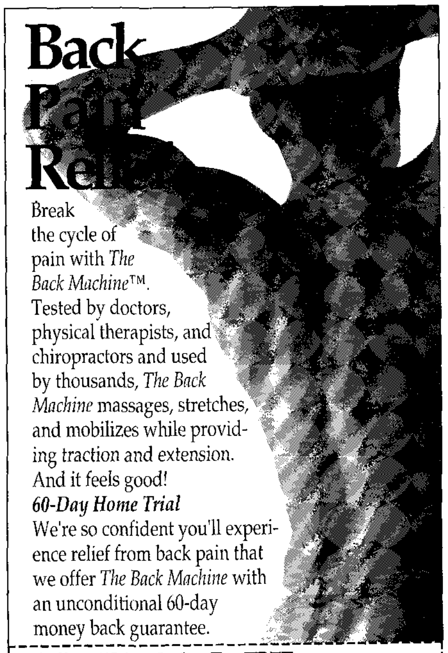

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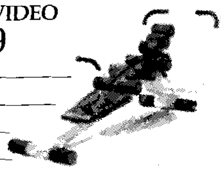

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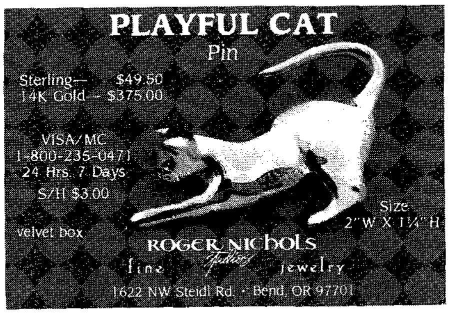

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gets mistaken for a joke or an imitation of someone dippy, when in fact your car is one of the few places besides the bathroom where you can sing the best songs the way they were meant to be sung. They all think my singing is terrible. Screw them. (I did.) You sing in the car because it feels good, you can't help it, and because you know the fucking words. Everyone I've gone out with—it's like a secret tradition they pass down from one to the next behind my back—laughs, then puts her hands over her ears, and after a while gets huffy or angry when I sing. I confess I'm not a professional, but I'm at least trying. You know, I wish I had some say in what traditions they pass from one girlfriend to the next.

What is it with me, though? I mean, I lie, I fuck whoever will let me, I can never remember the name of her best friend, and I hate to dance. I will, I do often, I volunteer, but it makes me nauseated, and I end up sweating too much. I come off with my shirt soaking, probably because I'm so out of shape. I attract a crowd of people who can't believe how bad I am. Like the worse I act, the more they want to be around me.

By the time Louise and I left the party, the liquor had done things. I kept running into the curb on the way out of the parking garage. I went home and shut my eyes and tried to sleep, except there was this guy, the guy who looked like a chick, walking around the party in my mind. I watched him walk up to the bartender, I saw him reach into his front pocket to get money, and I saw how his round butt stuck out a little—somebody stop me—and I was horny, so horny I couldn't believe it. I kept thinking about it and squeezing my legs together. Just his butt in his jeans. I'm like tingling. I actually wanted to whack off to him. See, in my mind he was sort of a woman, but— What do I want to say here?

I made myself fuck Louise. I didn't want to—and she was the very picture of unconscious—but I had to. I'm a man. Any man would do the same. The next morning over coffee and cereal, I asked her how she knew this guy, what was his name, where did he work. Now what? Was I all of a sudden gay? I went to sleep one night and woke up a homo?

Put yourself in my place. I had to clear my head. I had to forget. The next weekend I went away on business, and the one after that Louise and I and two other couples borrowed a friend's cabin for a quick getaway. We drank the liquor, made a pizza with psycho mushrooms, Vicky and Tom's dog got run over and killed, the waterbed Louise and I slept on somehow got punctured, and the night of the bathing-suit contest Tom left the Jacuzzi on and burned out the motor. The cabin was a short drive from the city, though. Sixty-five or seventy miles north on the interstate.

A few days later we were having drinks at Sid's Rat, short for Rathskeller, and the guy—his name was John Drake—came in. He was a housepainter. He ran his own company, and he also played in a band a lot. Louise knew him because her old roommate had some connection to the band.

"There's your friend," she said, and we both laughed. Louise waved hello and offered him a seat. I shook John's hand. We talked about the usual bullshit. Louise mentioned his band and he said something about it going O.K. He seemed like a pretty cool guy, very normal-acting with pale, light-blue eyes. Maybe he was half South American or something—his skin was a light-caramel color. His face was what you'd call angular, and when he smiled his face changed, since his teeth were perfect and very white. His hair was thick and straight and shiny black. I realized then that I'd seen John around before: he plays hoop at the rec center where I play hockey. Our leagues meet Tuesdays and Thursdays in the rink downstairs. I've seen him outside the gym.

John had to leave. We met some people from an ad agency I'd never heard of. They taught us a game called Upchuck which uses dice and shots of Cuervo. Just as I started to get the hang of it, my leg became tangled in a barstool and I fell down and chipped my tooth.

Later we were lying in Louise's bed, getting reacquainted, and I was trying to picture what John's house looked like on the inside. I wondered whether anything in my house needed painting. Louise gently implored me to lie on top of her and I saw his butt again in my mind. He had on different pants that night—tan khakis—and a faded blue denim shirt. You could tell he was very slim and in good shape. There I am, horned out and at the same time queasy with the weirdness of it. Sam the cat, he bad and naughty. He dirty kitty-cat. I felt like I was hairless and twelve years old again, caught wanking in my mom's closet. I thought the cops were going to come in and bust me, because they should've.

THE SUICIDES

The tractors at night,
the dimly lighted
kindly lobsters
with glass sides,
with men inside,
and at home wives,
and depression's black dogs
walking out of
the January hedges'
hacked-off sides.

—Jean Valentine

A BIG account threatened to leave our agency. Our creative team had to fire up a new campaign—radio, print, and television. We got it done at the wire, the campaign went over well, and I personally got the thumbs-up from my boss. The client rep took everybody out to a Japanese place. We dined on platters of sushi and bottles of Scotch. I was in a very chipper mood and even went in with another guy on an eight ball of Peruvian blow. I wired myself right up, high and tight and suffering no pain.

The last place we visited was this fake cowboy bar. It was late and the place was kind of empty. Two couples were dancing. The band up on the stage was still playing. I guess they had to stay. I bought an overpriced, watery pitcher of Bud and wandered around with it in one hand and a complimentary bucket of popcorn in the other. The cocaine had actually been cut with talc, I could tell from the taste, and it wore off fast. But something in that sushi acted like tequila worm on me, and I found myself in the mood to dance. I checked out the field but there wasn't any, so I kind of slanked around by myself. They were playing some twangy country song. The guy's voice was the kind you hear on the good side of country-and-Western, if there is such a thing—deep and clear, without that disgusting yodelling break in his high notes.

I went ahead and started dancing, beginning with a redneck-style hop-skip, like you might see on "Hee Haw." Then the hop gave way to the spin—I perfected a certain type of spin—splashing beer and popcorn in a circle around me, effecting sincere consternation in the other *danseurs*, and I looked up on stage and it was him.

John was the lead singer. This was the band Louise had told me about. He also played the violin, or fiddle, or whatever the fuck it's called. I stood there on the dance floor. He seemed pretty intent on the music and didn't look at the people too much. I started to get into it, sensing the country rhythm, doing a little move here and there, with a shake to it. I did a spin, bumped into somebody, and lost the popcorn, but I kept my eye on him and went up close to the stage to dance. I danced up and back and snapped my fingers. I yelled "Hey!" up to him. He nodded and gave a half wave, and then, when the singing part of the song ended and it was just the instruments playing, I shouted up that it sounded pretty good. He motioned to me that he couldn't hear. I moved as close as I could and yelled up that when he said he played in a band I didn't think it was a country band. He made a face and looked away; maybe he didn't understand. I yelled up that they probably did Elvis tunes, that it sounded like Charlie Daniels, and he turned to the guy playing the guitar and sort of laughed. I screamed up at him that I knew a lot of people who might get

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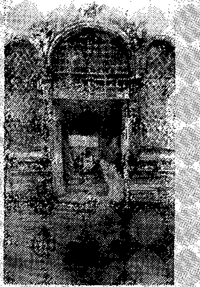

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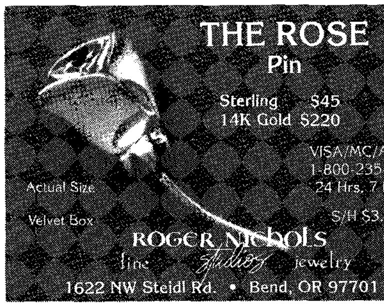

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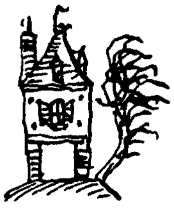
them gigs, but he was looking above me, straight ahead. I told them that the guitars sounded excellent, that all kinds of people liked country music, that when they were done if they wanted to get a beer I might be willing.

I WOKE up in my bed, with my coat and tie and shoes still on. It was Saturday morning. I took everything off. There was dried barf on my shoes. I'd puked in a urinal at that cowboy bar—that came back to me. And when I went over to try to talk to John while the band packed up their equipment I fell over a stack of drum boxes. On the way back home a wheelbarrow somehow got stuck underneath my car.



I went into the kitchen. The downstairs smelled like cat piss. Skippy's litter box was like an overflowing minefield. I poured a bowl of cereal and a dead beetle fell out, though when I touched him he started to walk.

I lay on the living-room floor and read the newspaper. There were leaves and sand and pubic hairs in the rug. Skippy's fur was stuck around the coffee-table legs.

I looked in the mirror. I had blackheads on the end of my nose.

I vacuumed, bought food, did the dishes, purchased a bi-level shag-carpet kitty facility for Skip. It cost seventy dollars. At first he refused to acknowledge it, but as the day went on I saw him jumping up to the carpeted box on top, pretending it was a cave, and chewing on the fresh, new-smelling carpet. I napped, cleaned my pores, called my girlfriend, and rolled a bone. I played an old jazz record my dad had given me and watched a movie on Cinemax. For the first time in a year I went to bed before midnight.

Sunday morning I looked in the phone book and found out where John lived. I put on a decent shirt and pants, shaved, and started over on foot, since it was only about half a mile away. I had on a new pair of loafers that were shiny and uncreased and cut into my heels when I stepped. I went into a 7-Eleven and got the Sunday paper and a little thing of flowers. In front of his house I paused to check myself in a car window. I looked fat and pale but well rested, and honest. I walked up the steps to the back door. It was not yet 10 A.M., and knowing he might be asleep I sat down to write a quick note of apology.

I heard somebody going around the kitchen, the refrigerator door slamming, and water running. When I looked in the window I saw a man standing behind the table looking at me. It was John, trying to figure out who I was. He opened the door and said something I couldn't make out and stood there watching me. I said, "I turned over a new leaf after Friday night and I'm apologizing to everybody I offended lately."

He held the door open, leaning halfway out. His light-brown skin showed against a white V-neck T-shirt. The door spring creaked. It sounded like a bird with a long neck—maybe a goose—being strangled. I stepped back, attempting to get a better stance, and placed my new loafer in the dog's water dish. It was a sign from God of something rotten.

Nobody deserves anything. But if there's such a thing as retribution, at that moment I was living it, paying myself back in the form of humiliation. No one, no one I've ever known, would've believed that act, me standing at John's door with the bouquet of flowers, hoping he'll takes them. Drum roll, then Sam the cat he takes two dainty steps and nose-dives off something very high.

He told me to come in. I reminded him about yelling up at the band while they were playing. That didn't ring a bell. I mentioned falling over the equipment. I said, "At least I didn't puke on you." Then his memory of me came back and I handed him the flowers. He kind of laughingly went and showed them to somebody in bed in the other room. A woman came out with him and we were introduced. Her name was Barb. I'd never seen her before. John asked if I wanted coffee, and while he was making it Barb went behind him to toast some bread and placed her hand on the small of his back. He told me all the drunk stories of playing music in bars as she went from the toaster to the refrigerator, John's eyes following. Barb poured some coffee for herself, he handed her a spoon, and she went back to bed.

The stories he told made what I did seem minuscule, or at least average. I told him you get sick of acting like that after a while. There's no dignity in being a slob.

The conversation turned around, and I told him what I do, writing radio and TV ads for an advertising agency. I said the next time we needed a country band for something I'd call him, and he gave me a card for his painting company with the phone number on it. It had the address of this house, and in quotes it said "Ask for John."

I went home and cleaned more, ironed dress shirts for the week, and trimmed my nose hair. I turned on the TV and thought of John, images of him walking around his kitchen covering over the show on the screen. I switched it off, because in my mind John was doing this funny dance—a little like what he did with his hips onstage playing the fiddle—in his smart, well-fitting jeans. I got up out of my chair and started to do my own dance in response. I clapped my hands and spun around, put on a Stones album, and hopped across the rug. I found the silver bracelet my mom had given me for my birthday and slipped it on, combed my hair back with gel and stared at myself in the mirror, holding my stomach in and flexing my flabby, skinny arms.

In advertising you have hectic times with everybody running at a frenzy for weeks. It ends and you get horribly slow times, and management begins firing the less talented people. Account execs go out for lunch and don't come back, secretaries fill the garbage cans with old files. I make pictures of Garfield using the "X"s on my typewriter, my office mate calls telephone sex lines. I couldn't stand it after a day and got John's card out of my wallet.

The card in my wallet was like a disgusting story people had found out about me, like I took nudie pictures of children. You want to run around erasing the story from everybody's minds, but events happen in your life that cannot be erased. The fact is, these events change you forever. You're not the same person anymore. You're someone new with the same name. You don't feel better, as in "New is better." You're somebody new but you feel mucky. Hopeful, but with a sour feeling down below.

I left a message on John's machine

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that I wanted to talk to him about a commercial we had in mind with a country-Western theme. I said we needed a band and I'd call him that night, and hung up fast.

At home I cooked dinner for myself. Louise asked to come over but I made an excuse about work. There wasn't anything left to clean or vacuum, so I played with Skippy. He kept scratching me accidentally. We weren't communicating very well. I was getting more nervous by the minute about making that call. I finally did, though.

John answered.

“Hey, John, it's me,” I said.

“Me? Jim?”

“This is Samuel Beardson,” I said. “I left a message on your machine today. I was the guy who came over Sunday.”

“Oh, yeah, sure,” he said. “What's the word?”

“Well, as I mentioned, our creative director, Chuck, wants to use Western music on this Juan's Tacos frozen-dinner commercial.”

“Tacos?”

“Selling tacos,” I said.

“Should I write a song about tacos?”

“No, don't do that,” I said.

“Just kidding,” he said.

“Oh, sure,” I said, and laughed.

“I don't know any songs about tacos offhand.”

“Ha-ha,” I said.

“Why don't I mail your office a demo tape and you or the other guy can tell me what you think,” he said.

“Good idea. That was your girlfriend I met, right?”

“Oh, yeah, she's someplace—”

“Girls—I mean women—it's a crazy thing!” I said.

He said, “I think she's down in the basement doing her laundry.”

“Really? How long have you two guys been living together?”

“About two years,” he said. “We're married.”

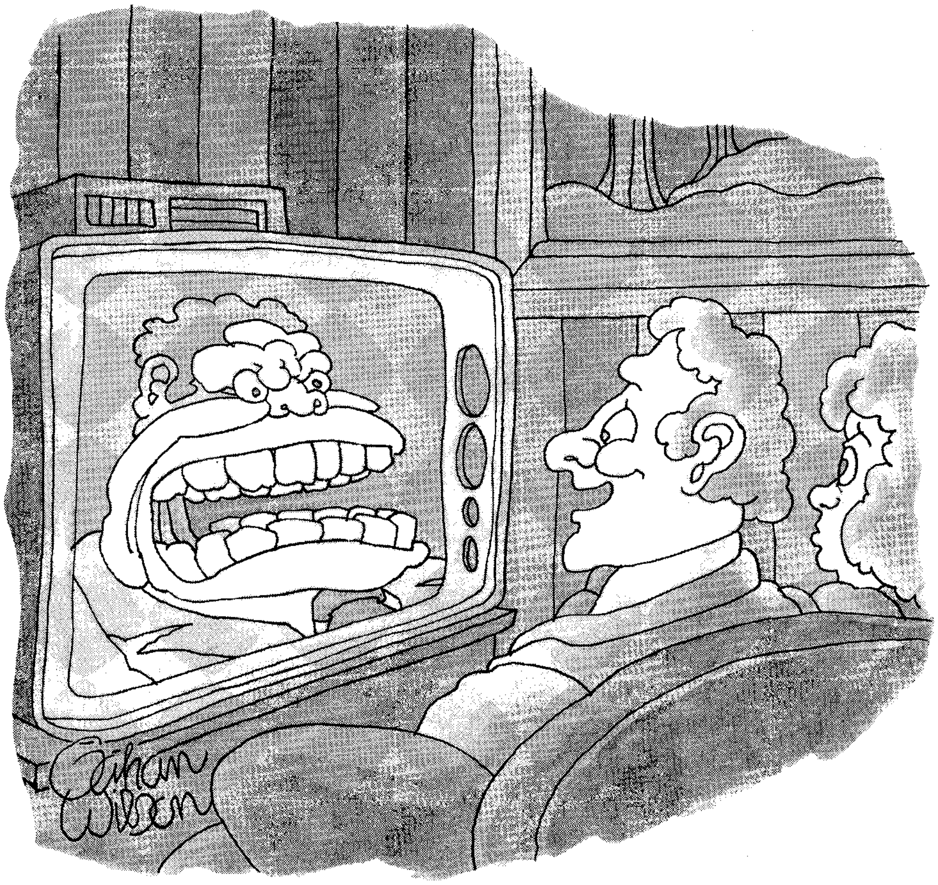
“Girlfriends—you need more of it or less of it, it's hard to tell which. Know what I mean?” I said.

“Yeah,” he said. “It's tough.”

“That's right,” I said.

“It's tricky,” he said.

I told John, “I could write a book on everything I know about girls. There's so much we don't understand. She cries for no reason, the guy gets angry, one of you is always on the defensive.”



“No one comes close to him for sound bites!”

“Yeah,” he said, laughing.

“It's like some weird kind of a religion,” I said.

“I'd take a woman over religion any day,” he said.

“Me, too,” I said. “You ought to come over tonight and I'll give you my full explanation.”

“What?” he said.

“I should write that book,” I said, “and give my full explanation.”

“Yeah,” he said. “Great idea.” Then he laughed.

We said a couple more things and hung up.

AFTER work the next day I drove to the mall. I walked into every store. It was like wishing you were hungry so you could satisfy the craving, but what food would you want? Not chocolate, not booze, not salty or sweet, not cheesy, not ice cream, not chips.

A men's boutique had some loose, blousey shirts on sale, with rounded cuffs and pleats on the shoulders. I bought a tan one. I bought some navy pants made of a thin material, and a pair of flat black shoes. Then I went down to the department store and got some new hair gel and some cream that's supposed to tone your skin.

The woman behind the counter was in her fifties. She had a pretty, narrow face and a pointed chin, circular, drawn-on eyebrows, maroon lipstick, and a stiff yellow crown of hair surrounding her head like a plastic lion's mane. I asked her what a model would use to maybe improve his look. “If you want to look good,” she said, “the way average men look, then go home. You're fine.” She took out a jar of white cream and a tray of what looked like pastel crayons. “But if you want to look better, sit down in that seat. Let's give you some zest. Let's give you a little pep. Some sex appeal.”

“Sounds good,” I said.

She held a red crayon up to the light. “Let's give you a little masculine pizzazz.”

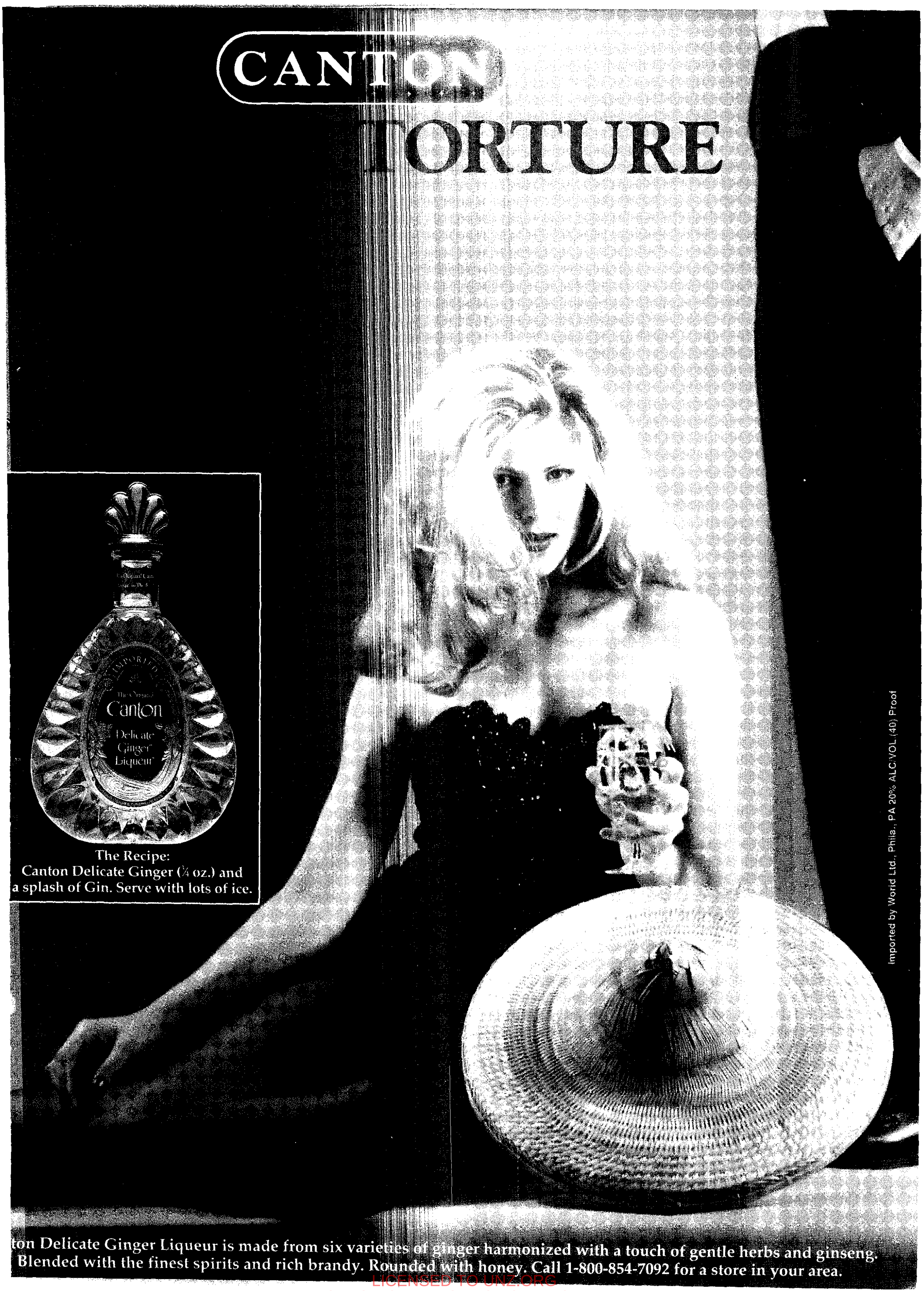
“O.K.,” I said.

“That's the way you wear your hair?”

“What do you mean?”

“Too flat,” she said, fluffing up the front part.

She showed me an eyebrow darkener,



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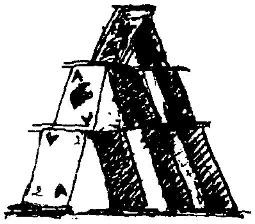
MASSACHUSETTS

to make the brow stronger, she said—more expressive. I leaned over the counter, and she gently drew a tiny black brush through my left eyebrow. I watched in the mirror. Then she did the other one. With each stroke I looked more and more like my sixth-grade football coach, Mr. Gaspari. I held her wrist. "That's great," I said, "I don't want it on me now. Just tell me what to buy."

They had a cream to make it look as though you were tan, and a lip moisturizer that makes the lips a deeper red. I bought those and something you brush on your eyelashes, because mine barely exist. She gave me a special sponge to start with and a powder-finish thing that goes on last. I bought another powder, too, for drying up excess moisture. I paid with my credit card and she said, "For touchups!" handing me the bag.

I suppose I thought if he saw me, if he and I took a walk and caught a glimpse of ourselves passing by a store window, I would know something then. I would know what to say. This wasn't a guy-girl thing. That is to say, this wasn't a sex thing, no. Not entirely. It was also a third thing I keep trying to describe. Maybe spiritual.

I took a shower, shaved, and did everything the way the woman explained. I used the sponge first, did the eyebrow stuff and then the tanning cream. Put it on the neck and ears? I didn't know. I brushed some of that junk on my eyelashes. It clotted up and fell in my eye. I had to take out a contact lens and flush my eye over and over until I finally got the gunk out. I applied the powder finish last. I put on my new clothes and shoes. The pants were my normal size, but my big ass barely fit, and then I ripped the seam trying to straighten them. They were brand-new pants. I grabbed my wallet. There were no pockets in these pants. They were smooth in the front and back. What do you do with your wallet when you wear them—shove it up your ass? I went out to the car. The seam ripped more as I got into the driver's seat.



Behind me headlights came up the driveway, blinding me. It was Louise. Now her car was in the way. She got out and headed for the front door, but she spotted me in my car and walked over. I rolled down my window and said, "Hey."

Louise bent down and looked at me at eye level. It took a few seconds. She said, "Hey, Sam," scratching her upper lip, the place where the soft white hair is a little thick, an area I told her she should get waxed. She was smiling, but her smile was getting weirder and weirder. "Ha," she said.

"Ha-ha," I laughed back. Nobody could think of a thing to say. She could have said any number of things. "Have you looked in the mirror lately?" was what she said.

I lifted an eyebrow to play along. "That's what I was just doing," I said. "Is it on right?"

"Sam," she said, but it was more like a question, the beginning of a question.

"I made a bet. I have twenty minutes to get back to Sid's Rat and sing to these guys to collect."

"What guys?"

"The bartender."

"You look like Sinbad," she said.

She looked at me, at one eye and then the other eye. Back to the right eye, back to the left. "I bet you're lying." Her voice was muddy in her throat. She looked one last time, her hands on her knees, ducking down to the open window. "God," she said, "you lie so bad," not knowing if the way I looked was a joke or not, or where it might be leading.

"Don't be ridiculous," I said. "I haven't done anything wrong."

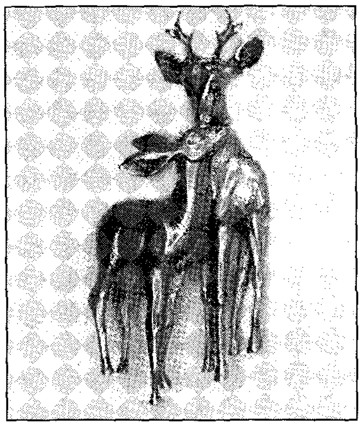
"We haven't seen each other in two weeks," she said.

"Louise, take a pill," I said.

Louise coughed and pulled a tissue out of her pocket. "What am I doing?" she said, and she stood up. I was left sitting in the driver's seat, staring at her fly. Her hips turned toward the house and then toward her car. Then she was gone.

I went back inside and took the clothes off. I put them in a paper grocery bag and got back in the car in jeans and a sweatshirt and headed over to the rec center. That hoop league John played in met on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the same as my hockey league, and I wanted to be there when he came out.

A fountain stands by the entrance, and cars drive up to drop people off and pick them up. There are street lights that make everything bright, and I stood off



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to the far side of the building, where it was darker, out of people's way. I paced back and forth, checking each time the door opened to see if it was John coming out. I still had on that lip stuff and everything. I looked strange, I bet. A tan, pretty Coach Gaspari. I must have seen two hundred kids with hockey equipment, chopping their sticks against the sidewalk while they waited for their moms to come get them. Finally the basketball players came out. At the same time a few guys from my hockey team came out the other set of doors, all sweaty, carrying bags of equipment. I'd forgotten about this possibility. They came down the sidewalk toward the parking lot behind me. I tried to figure out how I could intercept John without my teammates seeing me, but there was no way, so I took off at a run, not stopping or listening to hear if they saw me, and got out my keys and bolted.

DURING the final phone call it kept going silent, with me not saying anything. John didn't know what I was thinking. How could he know? I thought I might be getting a peptic ulcer. My father got a peptic ulcer at age thirty-two. I said, "Your band is great."

"Thanks," he said. "So your office got the demo."

"Yeah, the way you sang on it was terrific," I said. "You could sell anything with that voice."

"Appreciate it," he said.

I can't remember what else I told him. But then I said, "Can I ask you a question?"

"Shoot," he said. "What?"

"Hey, would you come over tonight and I could make you dinner?" I figured if I just said it. Because it was that or not say another word.

He said, "This isn't about the tacos, is it?"

"I could make tacos."

"Are you gay?"

"What?" I said. "No."

"Forget it," he said, and hung up.

"Forget what?" I said, but I was too slow.

I didn't want to do anything with him. I didn't even think of sex with him. It didn't enter my mind. Well, of course it did. But to hang around John, the two of us sitting there together—that would mean something to me. He'd call with some funny thing he had to tell me. Then I'd know. Then we'd both know. Maybe he'd ask if he could borrow something and I'd say yes. Or the two of us could get a video. It's not a big deal. I don't have to explain this. It's obvious how I felt.

I FEEL new, but I don't feel shiny and clean. I feel older, newer but older. It doesn't make sense. The new me feels old and heavy. Watching TV makes it worse.

I have the memories, crisp ones, of every moment of love that's ever touched this flesh. The elegant photo of Ann in my office is among these reminders. I sit at my desk at work and every few minutes go back to it. The way her mouth begins to open, with her eyes cast down shyly so that if you stare you begin to wonder what she's thinking. I must say it's a good ad. What else would I need? At present it seems I can't get close to anyone without offending her. Or him. I decide to call Louise. She takes the phone and puts it near the Cuisinart I gave her last year—set on pulse/mash, it sounds like—so I have to hang up. Of course Louise still turns me on, but what do I do? Go over there half gay and start kissing her? Joseph, her roommate, would take one look at me and know something's a little off. And what about Joseph? Not my type. What am I saying! Mother of God, listen to the way I'm talking.

A week has passed since John hung up on me. My house is so neat. I washed the kitchen floor last night on my hands and knees. I should take photos of it. If I had a family I'd get everybody down here now, dressed up, and take the Christmas-card picture before the place got messy again. If I were married and had kids. But where would I get a Christmas tree this time of year? And who would I marry? I'll tell you who I should marry: myself. With my cat Skippy as the mascot. We could sail around the world together. I'd get Skippy a tiny yellow rain suit. "Man the mizzenmast, you little furry wog," I'd say. "Get me a halyard." The ship would be my kingdom. I'd have a sword and an eye patch, some movies on video belowdecks, for when the wind dies. I'd love the seagoing life. Maybe out there I'd come across something I could understand. ♦

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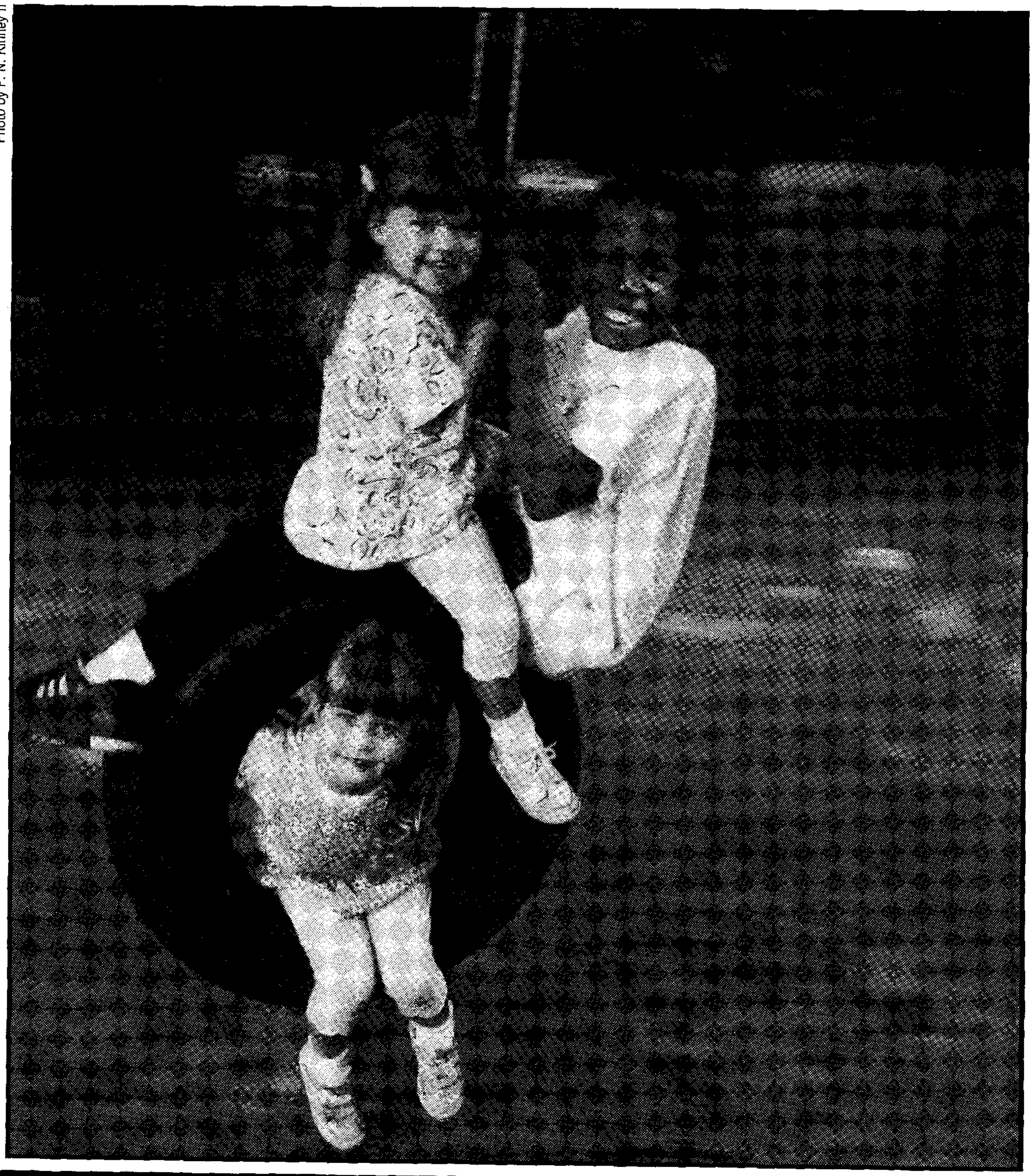

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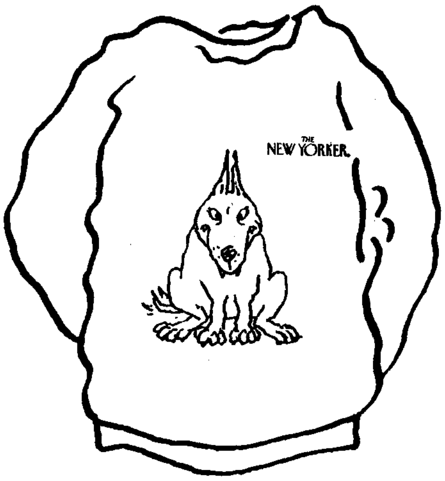

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THE CRITICS

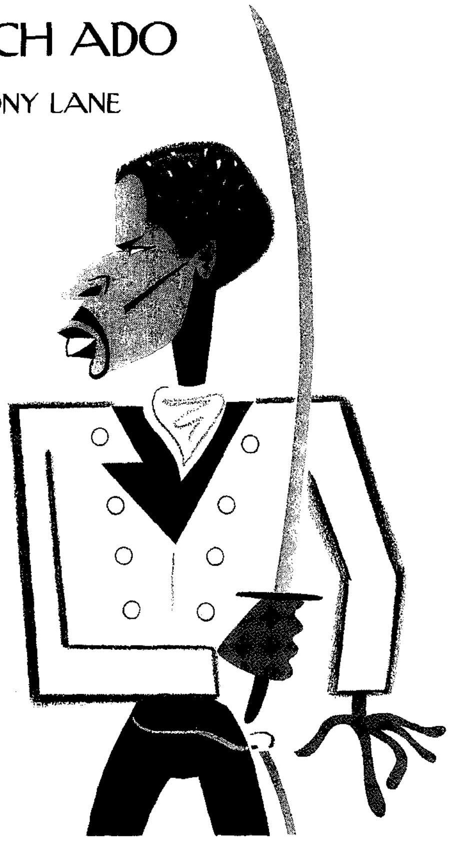
THE CURRENT CINEMA

TOO MUCH ADO

BY ANTHONY LANE

“Much Ado About Nothing” could become Ralph Lauren’s favorite film. Everyone lazes about in cool bleached cotton and linen, and since Shakespeare is no longer around to demand a cut, his fee was easily diverted into the budget for tanning lotion. The director, Kenneth Branagh, shot the movie at a luscious Tuscan villa, and is eager to prove that the money was well spent. His camera prowls the perfect hedges, gawps at the fountain, and joins in anything that looks like a dance. In a way, Branagh is on to something: the courtly promiscuity of it all—a feeling that these people have awarded themselves a moral vacation. But the play likes to jog their elbows, too, and remind them that pleasure comes at a price; its tempting silkiness, in language as much as in lust, is shot through with darker threads. The film glances at these, but turns away to greet the sun; every frame is telling American audiences to book a trip to Italy.

There’s nothing new in this. Movies have always urged us to pack up our troubles, and the really brazen ones were full of people who had nothing to pack in the first place. The “Bonjour Paris!” number in “Funny Face” is shameless travelogue, although it somehow rewrites the traditional contract of the tourist. Fred Astaire and Audrey Hepburn aren’t improving themselves by looking at the city; it’s the other way round—Paris is lucky to have them. But more recent movies just drop their characters in yummy locations to make us drool; this is fine for the mindless languor of “Enchanted April,” but it won’t wash for the brainy, bickering world of “Much Ado.” You can tell from the start that something is wrong. Out on a roasted hillside, lads and lasses are throwing back their heads and laughing at absolutely nothing. When told that Don Pedro (Denzel Washington) is coming to Messina, they respond like teen-agers at an early Beatles concert.



Matchmaker: Denzel Washington as Shakespeare’s Don Pedro.

You wait for the movie to hit its rhythm. Unfortunately, that means slow motion: the revellers billowing down the hill and off to the communal showers, Don Pedro and his merry men floating in on horseback—the Ambre Solaire gang versus the Magnificent Seven. At last, they meet, under the formal stare of an overhead camera, and the story can get under way: Hero makes Claudio go all funny inside, while Don John smolders with unreasoning malice on the sidelines. Welcomed by Leonato, he replies, “I thank you. I am not of many words, but I thank you.” Reticence whispers of villainy, of darkness under wraps; this is a world where happy folk have too many words to say. Keanu Reeves makes a lustrous Don John, in tight leather pants, although I like to think he took the part only because it contained the line “A very forward March-chick!”—which sounds like something from “Bill & Ted’s Excellent Adventure.” And guess what—it was cut.

Meanwhile, the other lovebirds are pecking each other’s eyes out. Branagh plays Benedick, and, in a bold casting move, Emma Thompson plays Beatrice. This should have worked fine: there has long been a dash of Beatrice in Thompson’s manner—that waspish need to sting other people’s tender hearts—but here it flies out of control. Listen to her in “Howards End” and you catch the testy dying falls of the confirmed skeptic; for “Much Ado” she decides to whoop up the dialogue and crown it with an astonished cry. Duped into thinking that Benedick desires her, Beatrice ends the scene with a declaration of faith:

> For others say thou dost deserve, and I
> Believe it better than reportingly.

This is a rare break into verse—she and Benedick normally converse in prose—but the lines are still more sober than sensational. Thompson thinks otherwise, however, and there’s music stirring to back her up. Any movie that tries to turn the word “reportingly” into a clarion call is playing the wrong tune.

The camera makes a willing accomplice to all this. It comes in close to watch Branagh and Thompson swap gibes, but they seem to forget just how

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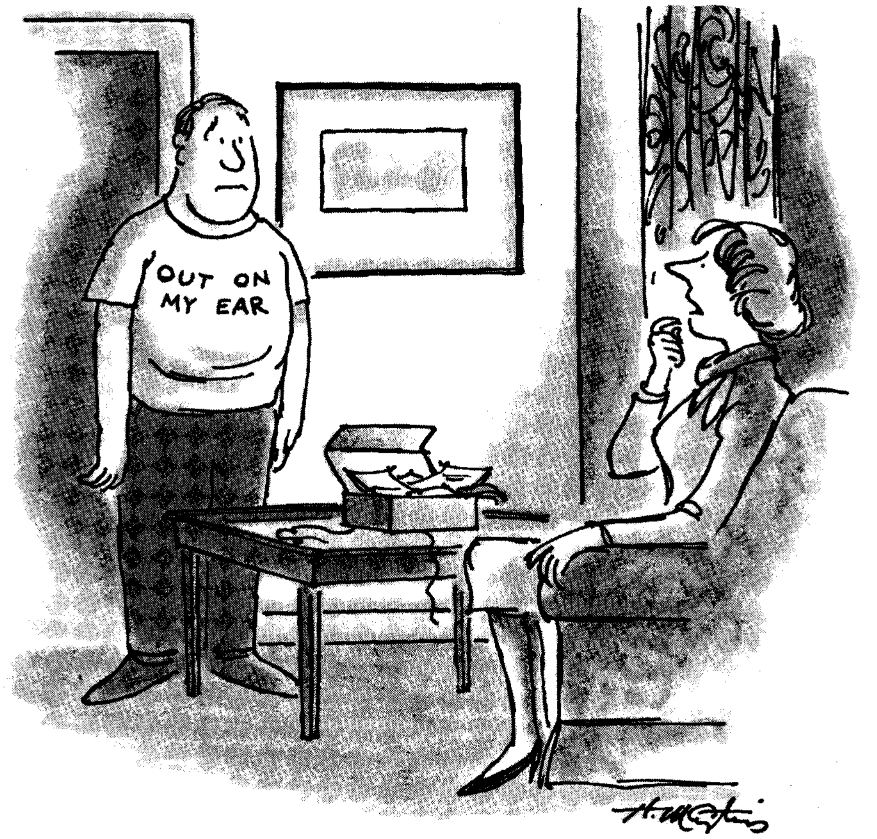
close that is, bugging their eyes and throwing off gestures more suitable to the stage; it's the same blaring, in-your-face rush of excess that you get when watching opera on film. I longed for some distance to cool it all down, but Branagh seems worried that we might not get the jokes (or, even worse, that the jokes aren't funny enough), which means they have to be dragged into the foreground. When Benedick hears himself discussed by Don Pedro and other friends, the scene cries out for depth of field—a lens gazing down the delicious perspective from swagger to cunning, then back the other way. Love games, eavesdropping, betrayals big and small: imagine what Robert Altman could have done with "Much Ado." Instead, we get Kenneth Branagh wrestling with a deck chair, or dropping his jaw at the camera to indicate surprise.

You can't blame him for trying to crank the plot up into slapstick—the play's flurry of impostors and loony schemes isn't that far from Wodehouse—but slapstick is not best served by cheap reaction shots. At one point, Brian Blessed, playing Antonio, even brushes a tear from his eye. Another squirt of bad taste and all this could have turned into camp. Beatrice and Benedick celebrate their deluded love in superimposed slow motion: she's on a swing, he's splashing around the fountain. I tried very hard to convince myself that this was a parody, like Leslie Nielsen and Priscilla Presley jogging along the shore in "The Naked Gun," but no luck: the movie genuinely shares in the joy it should mock. You sit there thinking, If this is Branagh's idea of civilized wit, how on earth will he play the lowlife? The whole point of Dogberry is that he juggles words around as violently as Beatrice, even though his never land in the right place—he's all gab without the gift. But Michael Keaton's Dogberry seems to have got the wrong end of the stick: he thinks that the language should be so tortured that we can't *hear* it. He bites the lines off and chews them to bits—as he did in "Beetlejuice," although that character got by on sheer vitriolic fizz. Here Branagh devises a physical gag to help him out: gallop off the side of the screen, pause for a moment while the camera holds steady, then gallop back in the other direction.

This lumbering technique infects the whole cast, except for Reeves, Richard Clifford (a fine, sombre Conrade), and Denzel Washington. Don Pedro is not



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an easy part—the sophisticate who gets badly gulled, a Pandarus too dry to risk the follies of love for himself. But Washington holds so much back, and trades so quietly on his own sexiness, that Don Pedro is the one character in whom your interest brightens rather than fades. When he and Claudio (Robert Sean Leonard) learn of their dreadful mistake, we see Leonard wince and crumple like someone having trouble with a contact lens, but Washington keeps still and absorbs the pain. A modern audience will wonder what the fuss is about—this is the movies, after all, where losing your virginity is no worse than losing your car keys. Washington never douses the good humor, but he alone convinces us of the gravity that lies beneath it. He thus prepares us for the rebirth of Hero, apparently back from the dead—a neat comic surprise, but also, in its exquisite dissolving of shame, a glance forward to "Pericles" and "The Winter's Tale."

It's hard to spoil the moment, although the final sight of Claudio in white ducks, with one protective arm around his bride, looks horribly like the Renaissance answer to "An Officer and a Gentleman." Why do Branagh's films keep going wrong like this? He began with "Henry V"—an honorable piece of work, even if its best scenes were borrowed from "Chimes at Midnight." But since then he has dipped a toe into various genres without ever taking the plunge, and the results—"Dead Again," "Peter's Friends," and now "Much Ado"—feel like busy, well-meaning pastiche. When Beatrice nuzzles a bunch of grapes in the opening scene, we know at once that the movie has settled for comic-book pastoral and won't be running any risks. The best directors honor Shakespeare by testing him to the limits, seeing how far they can squeeze the plays into unlikely shapes. Welles brought in "Othello" at ninety-one minutes, and although Gus Van Sant stripped away most of the Shakespeare from "My Own Private Idaho," it remains the best and most affecting commentary on Falstaffian sleaze. Branagh thinks he knows better, knows how to make the play come alive, when in fact it was never dead. "Much Ado About Nothing" has the same empty rumbustiousness that echoed through Zeffirelli's "Romeo and Juliet"—a grim determination to keep up the good cheer. Rarely has the title rung so true. ♦

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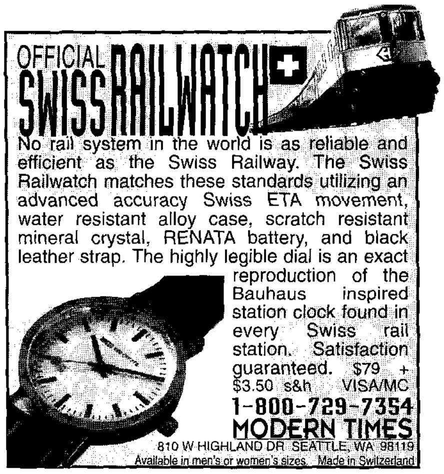

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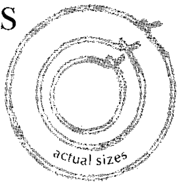

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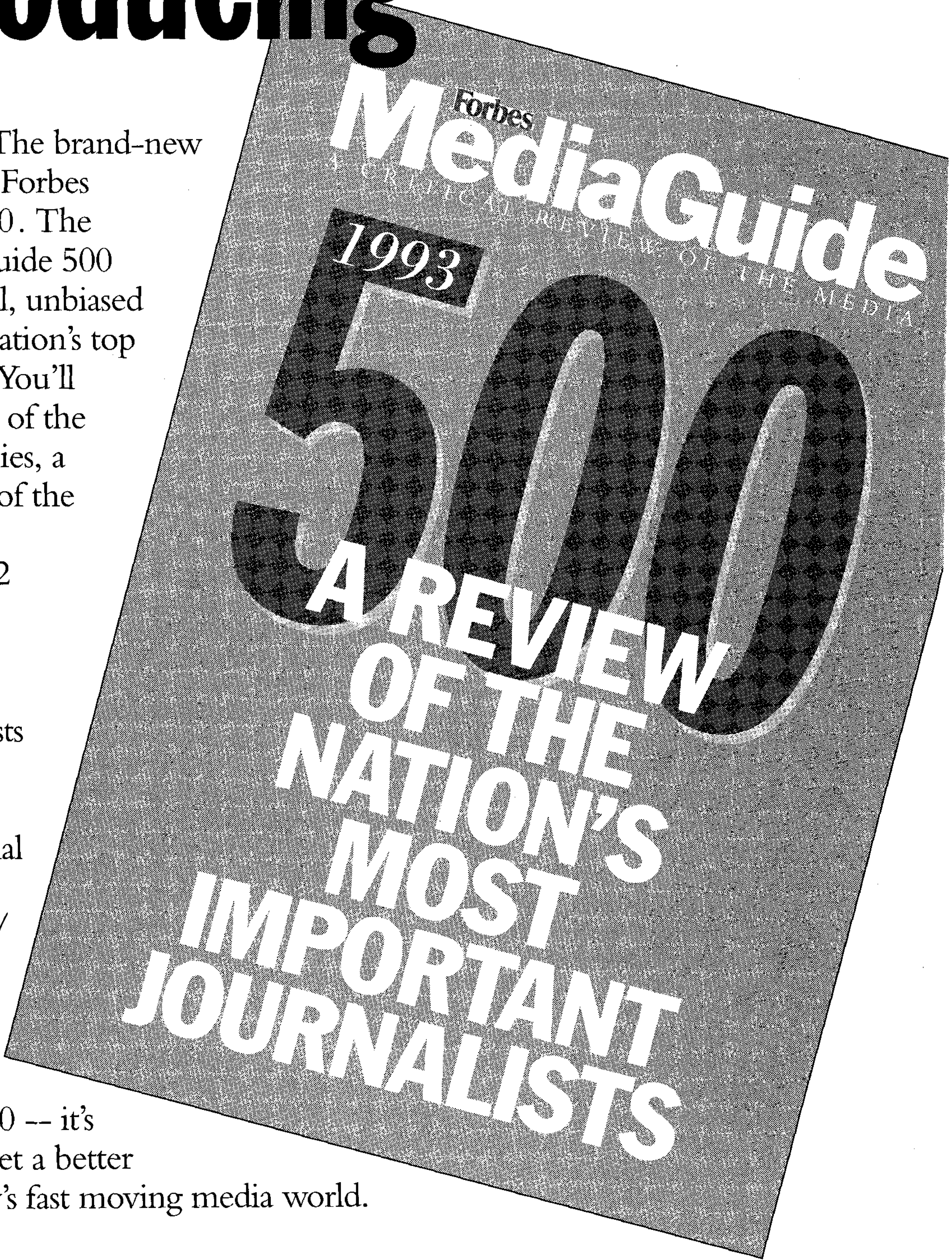
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THE THEATRE

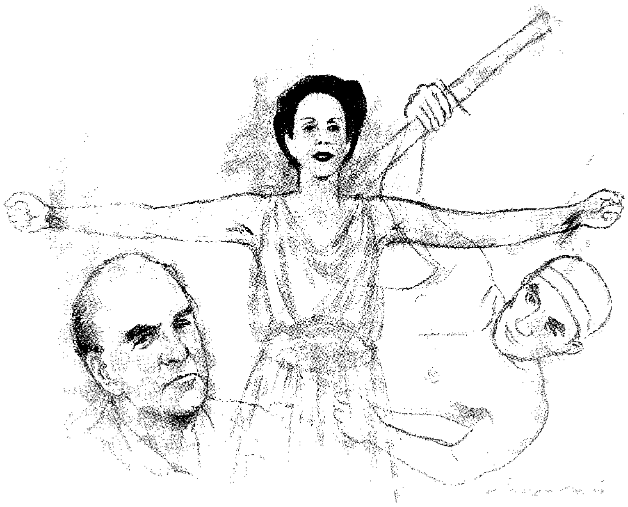
GRAVITY AND GRACE

BY JOHN LAHR

ON November 25, 1970, the novelist Yukio Mishima orchestrated his famous suicide, committing hara-kiri and then having his head cut off. At a stroke, the mind-body split he wrote about was finally resolved. Mishima's death, at forty-five, was, like his life, an act of fanatical will and aesthetic principle. He had written forty novels, twenty volumes of short stories, and eighteen plays, among the last of which was "Madame de Sade" (1965), a meditation on the metaphysics of desire. De Sade, who, like Mishima, was a voluptuary of the perverse, never appears in the play, but the memory and the import of his libertinism dominate six women who wait and worry about him through his long incarceration. Mishima projected onto de Sade his own quest, in which perversion became an act not of debasement but of discovery. In a late poem, "Icarus," Mishima wrote:

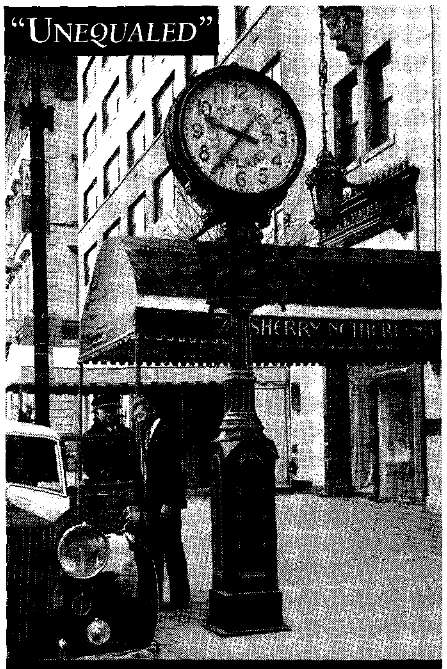
> Why, still, should the lust for
> ascension
> Seem, in itself, so close to madness?
> Nothing is that can satisfy me;
> Earthly novelty is too soon dulled.
> I am drawn higher and higher, more
> unstable.

Both Mishima and de Sade were romantic individualists who embraced pain as a way of defeating boredom and extending the limits of consciousness. In this romance of the self, both were quintessentially modern: destroying themselves for meaning. De Sade had a prodigious genius for perversion, and Mishima seems to have instinctively understood the sense of blessing implicit in the monstrous. His play makes a case for the necessity of evil. Recounting de Sade's being beaten with a broom eight hundred and fifty-nine times, Comtesse de Saint-Fond, the play's female libertine and de Sade's disciple, says, "If you increase numbers until they are no longer believable, evil itself becomes a miracle." She argues that de Sade, whose miracles "have nothing in common with the miracles lazy people merely wait for," works for his spiritual enlightenment.



Agneta Ekmanner in Ingmar Bergman's production of Yukio Mishima's "Madame de Sade."

So does the director Ingmar Bergman, who understands the deeply religious nature of Mishima's inquiring into the profane. Bergman's formidable gifts of penetration and design turn "Madame de Sade," which on the page is apparently all talk, into a magnificent exhibition both of Mishima's subtle moral debate and of his own incomparable stagecraft. It is one of the most noble evenings I've ever spent in the theatre. The show is part of a Bergman doubleheader (along with "Peer Gynt") and will play for three days at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, starting on May 20th; for four years, it has been in repertory intermittently at Stockholm's state-subsidized and exquisite art-deco Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern (where I saw it three weeks ago). In it Bergman sets himself the challenge of containing the play's turbulent passions within the formal spirit in Japanese drama. He does away with all period dé-



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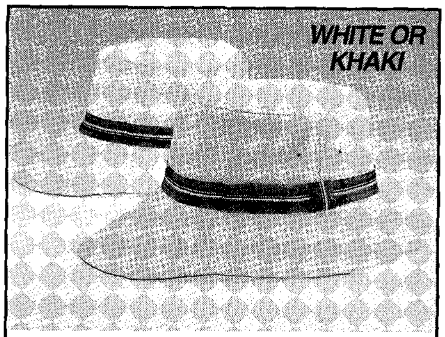

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cor. He streamlines Mishima's baroque text (herein quoted from Donald Keene's translation). He allows his actors no excessive gestures. The play speaks through the dramatic interplay of groupings, costume, color, words, and subtext. Every acting moment is filled, every inch of stage space is dynamic. It's a thrilling and educational encounter, which makes American theatre and most European theatre, by comparison, look like minor-league stuff.

"What I like about Ingmar is that he very rarely speaks about what he means," says Donya Feuer, the American-born choreographer who worked with Bergman on his film of "The Magic Flute" and his opera version of "The Bacchae" and has perfectly realized the "choreographic spirit" behind Bergman's reading of "Madame de Sade." "By what he does, you understand what he means. Everything Ingmar does is emotion. To give a place for this emotional response, he has to get the actors in the same place he is—to touch them in the most secret part of their imagination. In 'Madame de Sade' we didn't want to do anything that was Japanese in itself. But the exactness of Mishima's language demanded an exactness in the actors' movements and in their attack. The way they looked and didn't look. The way they listened onstage, and waited, and exited. Since it's an open space and very exposed, all the tension and the boundaries had to be created by the women themselves in relationship to each other. We began to work with that. There isn't a moment in this performance which doesn't fit Ingmar's plan. In every scene Ingmar searches for a space—a kind of rectangle, which varies several inches one way or another—that he calls 'the acoustic and optical center' of the stage. From this glowing place everything comes. Every single moment has a form."

From the play's first beat, when the housekeeper, Charlotte (Helena Brodin), scurries onstage in Japanese fashion but dressed as a period French servant, Bergman announces the game of contrasts he is about to play. Charlotte, previously the housekeeper of Comtesse de Saint-Fond, is a bridge between the worlds of liberty and respectability. Bergman uses her like a kind of silent chorus, alternately astonished and appalled as she eavesdrops from behind the background arches. The boundaries of the debate are established at once when the "saint," Baronesse de Simiane (Margaretha Byström), whose piety will put her in a nunnery by the finale, comes face to face with the "sinner," Comtesse de Saint-Fond. Bergman uses Charles Koroly's magnificent costumes to make palpable the implications of this battle between denial and freedom. Simiane, soon to be joined by her counterpart in containment—the hostess, Madame de Montreuil—is decked out in the periwigged and corsetted formality of eighteenth-century high fashion. A wall of fabric and wire barricades both women off from the world. By contrast, Comtesse de Saint-Fond (the brilliant and brazen Agneta Ekmanner) enters in streamlined riding gear, her breasts clearly visible through a pale-marigold tunic. The effect is as teasing and shocking as her personality. She is neither powdered nor periwigged. The red of her lipstick and the small ruby pendant she wears hint at blood.

"It's a very dangerous part," Ekmanner told me. "I feel very exposed onstage. But it's no time to lie. You can't offend the public in doing this extremely difficult part—full of sorrow and longing—without doing it as honestly as possible." Ekmanner lays herself recklessly open to the audience, just as Saint-Fond does to the women on whom she has come to call, and who dismiss her as decadent. Montreuil wants Saint-Fond to trade sexual favors with the High Court officials in exchange for their lifting de Sade's death sentence. Saint-Fond recounts the offenses that have brought de Sade to this pretty pass: a menu of infamy that includes orgies with whores, the use of Spanish fly, sodomy, and flagellation. This news sends a *frisson* of fear through Baronesse de Simiane, who in the script protects herself from contamination by making continual signs of the cross, and in Bergman's version does so by hiding half her face behind her fan.

When Madame de Montreuil enters, the minuet of vanity and outrage steps up a pace. Montreuil (played with regal detachment by Anita Björk) is as chilly as her pale-blue dress, and as imposing. She is baffled by de Sade's capers but admits that "the one thing I *could* under-

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stand was honor." She wants de Sade's freedom for the sake of her distraught daughter, Renée, who is de Sade's long-suffering wife and whom she dubs "the bride of the King of Hell," and for the honor of the family name. Saint-Fond reads Montreuil's snobbery correctly, and continues to tweak the vanity of Montreuil's righteousness with her unrepentant knowledge of the flesh. "The most striking characteristic of the marquis' illness is how pleasant it is," she tells her. "Immorality has always been for me a perfectly appointed, completely self-sufficient preserve. It has its shepherds' cottages and its windmills, its brooks and lakes."

In Stina Ekblad's delicate and sharply defined interpretation, Renée puts her intelligence and her longing for meaning into the myth of her fanatic devotion, and allows de Sade to carry both the darkness and the passion that she won't own in herself. "Bergman gave me inspiring word pictures for the role," Ekblad told me. "For instance, of Anne, my sister in the play, he said, 'She's building a cathedral around her in which she is worshipping herself.' Of my character, Renée, he said, 'She's a hymn echoing in this cathedral.' Renée is more of a tune—changing, echoing. She's like a bell." In Act I, Renée gives lip service to conventional behavior. She presents herself in the role of dutiful and heroic victim. Saint-Fond brings this hypocrisy into focus with a mischievous question. "How does he treat you?" she asks Renée. The impropriety sends Montreuil and Simiane plunging behind their upturned fans. Decadence and duty square off. "If you were to see our marital bed," Renée says, saving face for the moment, "there would be nothing I should ask you to keep a secret."

Renée is wedded as much to the idea of marriage as she is to de Sade. In her transparent goodness, she lives up to her mother's idea of repute. Madame de Montreuil exhausts herself restoring the family name, and Renée is no less tireless both in living a blameless life and in whiting out the dark parts of her life. She rationalizes de Sade's yearning for blood—she says it's related to "the glory of his distant ancestors who served in the crusades"—and she refuses to listen to her mother's pleas to leave him. But what on the surface seems devotion is also a rigid defensiveness. In this, she is

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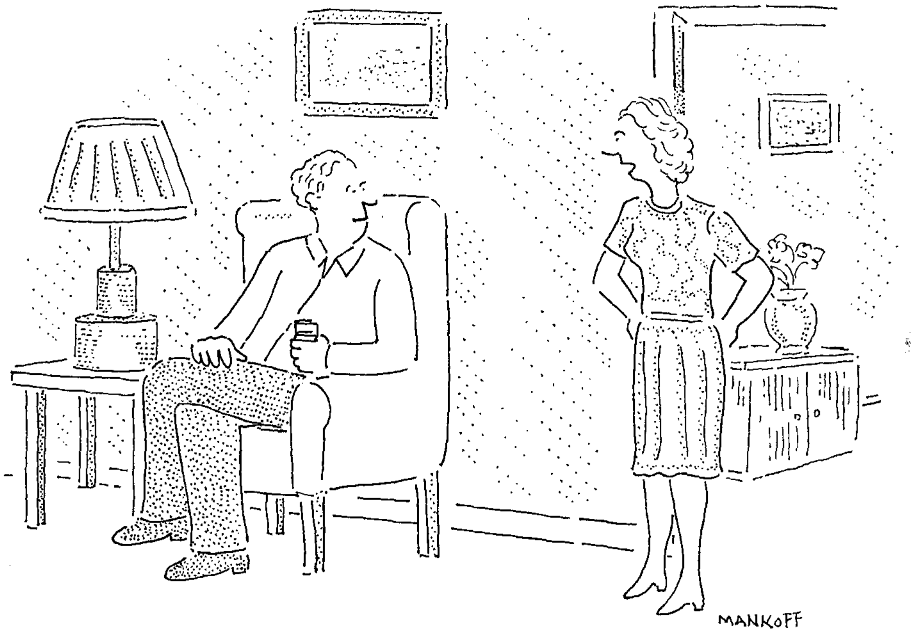
definitely her mother's child. But she is also a weird, refracted image of her husband. Both de Sade and Renée are in the avant-garde of suffering. Both are strangely inconsolable. De Sade acts out his anger on others; Renée murders parts of herself. He fiercely admits himself; and she, just as fiercely, hides herself away. The play skillfully brings this ambiguity to a head at the end of the first act, when Madame de Montreuil's other daughter, Anne, returns from Italy. The stunning and capricious Anne, superbly played by Marie Richardson as a languorous Fragonard seductress whose eyes sparkle with self-regard, announces that her companion in Italy was none other than de Sade, escaped from prison and in hiding. Montreuil begs her not to tell Renée. "She knows we went to Italy," Anne tells her flabbergasted mother, who has only just finished hearing Renée's entreaties to save her husband from prison. "And where Alphonse is hiding." Both Renée's devotion to de Sade and Montreuil's devotion to getting him released are at a stroke called into question. The carapace of convention—what Mishima calls "the unoriginal concepts of duty"—has cracked from the dangerous pressures it's meant to contain: the temptation of the imagination.

Life seems to have changed for the de Sade household at the beginning of Act II, as the curtain comes up on Renée reading Anne the court order announcing de Sade's pardon and his release from prison. In the intervening six years, which take us to the fall of 1778, de Sade has been internalized differently by each character. His genius for suffering has somehow deepened them and—on the surface, at least—made them mellower. To capture the change in the quality of their suffering and their passion, Bergman first changes his palette. At the opening of the act, a flamelike tree is projected against a red cyclorama, foreshadowing the fierce passion to follow. Time has left its mark on the sisters; and Koroly's dresses, in resonating shades of dark red and terra-cotta, convey an earthier, weathered sense of life. Renée's denial now takes the form of claiming kinship with de Sade. "My unhappiness has at last reached the level of Alphonse's sins," she says. A tone of resignation and skepticism has come into her voice. She understands that claims of happiness are a tapestry of denial, in which the woman "painstakingly weaves in, eye by eye, solitude, boredom, anxiety, loneliness, terrible nights, frightening sunrises." And when Anne bitchily suggests that de Sade never loved anyone, including Renée, she can hear the idea, while deflecting its hurt. "Everyone is free to have fantasies," she says. "Alphonse taught me the power of fantasy." The intoxication with suffering is most clearly dramatized by Saint-Fond, who, announcing her boredom with licentiousness, describes being stripped naked and used as the altar for a black mass. In this speech, full of grief and strange glory, Saint-Fond recounts the rebirth of



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feeling at an orgy where the blood of a sacrificial lamb coursed over her naked body and candles dripped hot wax on her outspread palms. She holds up her arms and points to scars like stigmata. She has been crucified and redeemed in the flesh, not in the afterlife. "Alphonse was myself," she says. They are bound together by a sense of absence which perversion turns into a kind of heroism.

Bergman savors every twist of plot and passion, then makes it pay. Saint-Fond tips the decorum of Madame de Montreuil's house toward delirium when she informs Renée that the pardon was merely a trap set by her mother to re-arrest de Sade, and that he is now in jail again. The stage is then left to the play's most extraordinary passage—a furious, stylized battle between Montreuil and Renée. Mother and daughter at first circle one another, with Renée begging her mother to free de Sade, and Montreuil asking what happiness his freedom would bring her. "The happiness of poverty. The happiness of shame," Renée says, in a hymn to her masochistic devotion. "That is the happiness with which I shall be rewarded for setting Alphonse free." The words outrage Montreuil, and in a sudden and stunning outburst she throws her fan across the floor: "You're lying, lying." She paints a lacerating word picture of an orgy at which her informant witnessed the conduct of Renée and de Sade, during another of his brief escapes from prison. Montreuil stands above her daughter, with her arms crossed in imitation of Renée's bound hands as her whipped nude body hung from a chandelier. "You dangled half unconscious in pain," she says. "With his tongue, he cleansed your body. It wasn't only blood he cleansed." She tears at the bodice of Renée's dress to expose her scars. Bergman sends mother and daughter reeling in fury to opposite ends of the proscenium, and then launches them toward each other in a flurry of accusations. As they descend on one another, their bodies lower to the ground like snarling animals in a standoff. "You never attempted, even in your wildest dreams, to imagine what it would be like to unlock the strange door that opens on a sky full of stars," Renée taunts, defending de Sade for opening her up to extremes of experience where "holiness and shame imperceptibly switch appearances." Hunkered down in front of her

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daughter, Montreuil counters, "That's right. We never tried to open the gates of Hell." De Sade has called out of Renée a demonic force. In this coruscating stage picture, Bergman demonstrates that Renée has been infected not only by de Sade's ideas but by his manic metabolism. On the last beat of the act, Renée, too, is saying "Alphonse is myself."

Projected clouds and the rumble of wind forecast the threatening wild card that history deals the de Sade ménage at the opening of Act III. Twelve more years have passed, and we are at the beginning of the French Revolution. The change in public mood is prefigured by Charlotte, the housekeeper, who now wears her hair loose on her shoulders. In her transparent insolence and her assertive walk, she registers the bumptious new democratic spirit. The violent search for new answers and new freedoms has made the dead Comtesse de Saint-Fond an icon of liberation, and even de Sade will become one of the Revolution's spokesmen. He is soon to be released from prison, and Madame de Montreuil, always with an eye to survival, now looks forward to his return. "Alphonse's vices may serve as a bill of acquittal not only for himself but for our whole family," she says, rationalizing de Sade's evil as a source of potential good. Renée's actual goodness has not been rewarded; in fact, she has been debased by de Sade in his novel "Justine," which cannibalizes her years of devotion to make a myth of vice. "Justine is myself," she says. Unexplained scars on Renée's wrists recall Saint-Fond's "stigmata" but not her redemption. Renée's public humiliation persuades her to take holy orders. And there is a still greater paradox about de Sade to be faced. "His fascination with destruction ended in creation," Renée says. In pursuing the light, she has learned through de Sade that it can come from improbable dark sources. The play neatly brings the audience to the spiritual impasse of modern life: one person dedicating the self to God and the other making a god of the self.

At the finale, de Sade arrives at the house and knocks on the door. "Tell me how the marquis looks," Renée says twice, a heartbreaking repetition. Charlotte describes an old, fat man with sallow skin and nervous eyes. "Please ask him to leave," Renée says. "And tell him this: 'The marquise will never see him again.' " With that, Renée exits, leaving Charlotte to pick up the discarded volume of "Justine." She starts to step on it, then reconsiders, and instead of destroying it she takes the book and walks off with it under her arm. Renée's history with de Sade may be over, but de Sade's life with the public imagination and the complex notion of individual freedom is about to begin. On that grace note, Bergman ends this flawless production, in which his genius is entirely in the service of the play's meaning. Next year, Bergman will be doing two plays at the Kungliga Dramatiska Teatern. Believe me, I will be there. ♦

DYNASTY

BY EDITH OLIVER

THE setting is a darkened stage, with a number of stacked chairs, some shrouded boxes, and, barely visible, a large portrait of Michael Redgrave, as Antony, on the wall at stage right. After strains of music, there are three loud knocks. Enter Lynn Redgrave, in coat and hat and carrying a suitcase; she motions at a work light, which flashes on. Thus begins Miss Redgrave's "Shakespeare for my Father," a wonderful evening at the Helen Hayes, in which Miss Redgrave reviews her own life, on and off the stage, in a search for her father and in an effort to bridge the distance between them. The play covers thirty years, starting with her birth (he didn't even bother to record it in his diary) and ending with his Parkinson's disease, which brought them together before it killed him, and it combines scenes from Shakespeare with anecdotes and reminiscence, as often funny as they are sad. Miss Redgrave has a gift for thumbnail impersonations: Noël Coward rehearsing "Hay Fever" with Edith Evans (a cinch); Maggie Smith (a rare achievement); Laurence Olivier; Tony Richardson; Richard Burton (during a backstage visit when she was in "My Fat Friend"); and, of course, her father himself—that chill center in the spinning theatrical world of Redgraves. The satiric humor is more than a bonus in what is essentially a serious play; it pervades her wry account of her progress, with little paternal interest, from drama-school reject to stardom. We end, inevitably, with Cordelia's death in the King's arms. Miss Redgrave acts all the roles, male and female, and her Shakespeare is better than any we've heard in years. Perhaps Sir Michael was envious of her talent; he should have been. Sixteen Shakespearean characters are listed in the program; my favorites are Viola and Olivia, Hamlet, Richard II (which she reads together with her father's recorded voice), and, of course, Cordelia. Eloquence and emotion have rarely been more beautifully combined. What Miss Redgrave has to tell us about her family—about her theatrical grandparents, in Australia, about her mother, Rachel Kempson, during the stress of Michael Redgrave's last illness, and about her brother and sister, lightly and sharply touched on—is certainly interesting, but Shakespeare carries the day.

"BLOOD BROTHERS," at the Music Box, is a nonmusical musical from Britain—a kind of glum cantata about twin boys who are separated at birth, when their mother agrees to give one of them to a wealthy, barren woman for whom she cleans house. The boys become best friends as children, in spite of social and financial differences; they fall in love with the same girl; they end up dead. But nothing very gripping happens, unless class tension is enough to hold your interest. Some of the performances, not to be too ungracious, are good. Con O'Neill is funny, in a grotesque way, as the poor twin, and so is Stephanie Lawrence, as the mother, although she is burdened with a fatuous song about Marilyn Monroe, which is reprised to the point of insanity. Jan Graveson is delightful as the girlfriend, and I also enjoyed Mark Michael Hutchinson, as the well-heeled twin, and Ivar Brogger, as his supposed father. Most of the actors do well, as a matter of fact, and I hope they return to Broadway under brighter circumstances. Willy Russell, of all people—author of "Shirley Valentine" and "Educating Rita," both of them splendid—is responsible for book, score, and lyrics. What is a downer like this doing at Irving Berlin's Music Box? ♦

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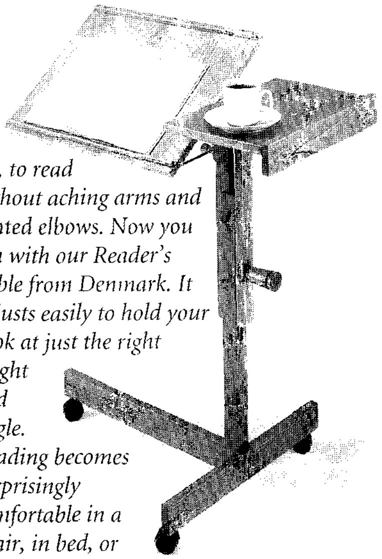

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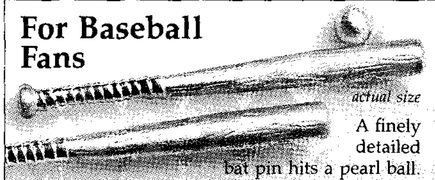

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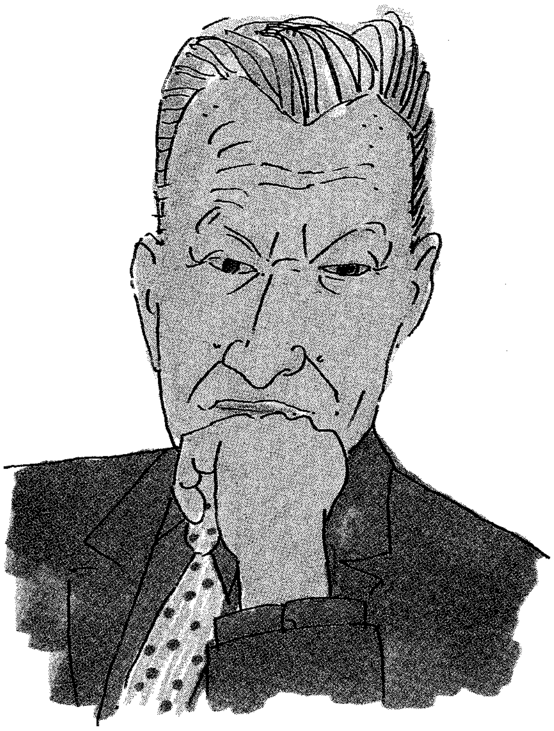

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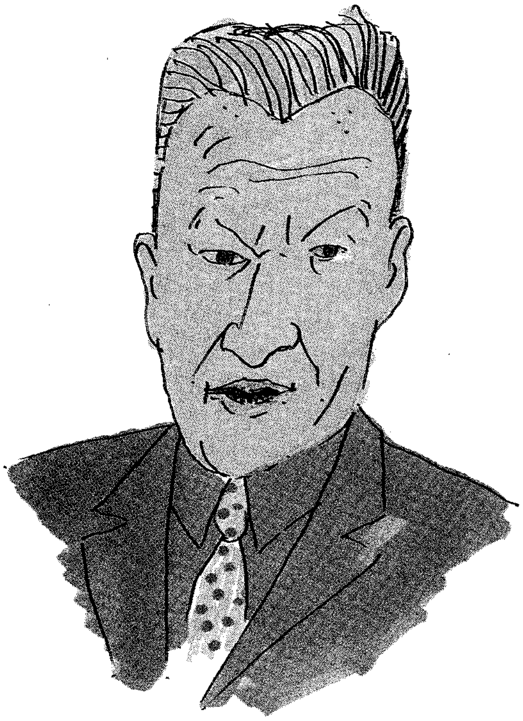

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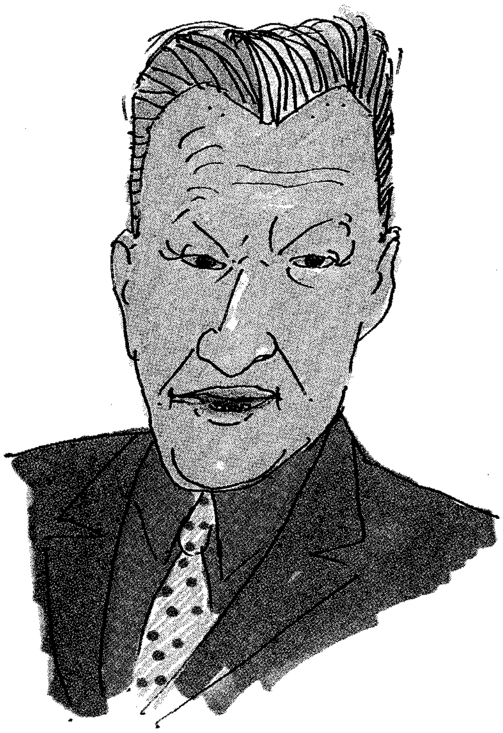

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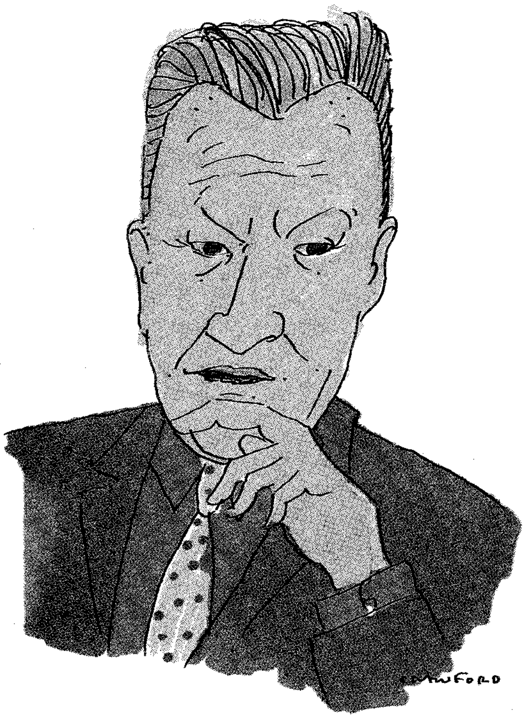


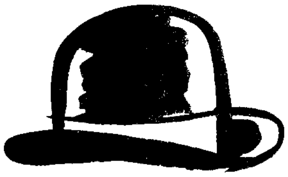
ON LOVE AND SEX *"What we have failed to grasp adequately, in my judgment, is the organic connection between love and sex. The two are fundamentally linked and in any attempt to grasp what's happening to your very complex yet intersecting processes of growth you cannot separate them."*

HAT TRICK

BY RICHARD JENKYNS

A FRIEND of T. S. Eliot's, staying with him sometime in the twenties, recalled waking on Sunday morning to find the door opening almost noiselessly. An arm appeared, removed a bowler hat from its peg, and vanished again. The poet was on his way to early Mass: it was the first evidence of his impending conversion.

Much of Eliot's character seems to be caught in this momentary scene—refined, courteous, conservative, secret, with passion moving beneath an impervious surface. The bowler hat imparts a distinctive flavor. The scene seems to anticipate Magritte's paintings, in which men in bowlers, their faces hidden or inexpressive, look upon violent or enigmatic events. Mr. Eliot, at his Sunday-morning service, confronts the holy mysteries in the garb of respectability, even staidness, and the bowler, black, hard, and impassive, appears both priestly and banal.



Fred Miller Robinson's "The Man in the Bowler Hat" (University of North Carolina; $24.95), an unusual, intriguing, but imperfect book, is an attempt to penetrate the bowler's significance in art, literature, and life. In recent times, the bowler has turned into a symbol of Britishness: on the Continent, a figure with a clipped mustache, a rolled umbrella, and a *chapeau melon* is commonplace in advertisements for tea, marmalade, or package tours to London. Twenty years ago, the City of London was still a sea of bowler hats and pinstriped trousers, and such is the power of expectation that when Richard Rogers' high-tech Lloyd's of London building was opened, in 1986, the New York *Times* claimed that the bowler-and-pinstripe remained the common uniform among the underwriters in their gleaming new home (signifying, maybe, a mix of fustiness and neophilia in the Britain of the Thatcher period), though in reality it was not much easier to find in the City by that time than berets, striped jerseys, and strings of onions are on the Rue de Rivoli. The British connotations of the bowler, however, are comparatively new, despite its British origin, and Robinson has found it on countless heads, not only on those of the Prince of Wales and the music-hall comedian but on many heads in many other countries. Sabina in Milan Kundera's "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" treasures her grandfather's bowler, and at one point appears wearing nothing but the hat and her underwear. (The bowler has been a favorite prop for artistes *en travesti.*) Beckett insists that the four principals in "Waiting for Godot" should all wear bowlers. Why?

Robinson's book is a search for answers to questions of this type, but first he gives us a little history. The bowler was designed in 1850 by James and George Lock, hatters, of St. James's Street, London, for a Norfolk landowner, William Coke II, who later became Earl of Leicester. At Lock's, the hats are still called Coke hats, but they were manufactured by William Bowler, across the Thames, in Southwark, and it is his name that has stuck—perhaps because of its fortuitous associations with roundness. Coke wanted a hat that his gamekeepers could wear on horseback without getting it entangled in low branches, and which was round and hard, so that falling objects could glance off it easily. So the bowler started as a riding hat; but soon, by some obscure process, it acquired a popularity that spread upward into the aristocracy, across to the urban middle class, and down to the petite bourgeoisie.

Its very ubiquity makes a problem for Robinson, who wants it to signify as "a fully resonant object": "Sport, leisure, urbanity, suburbanity, finance, respectability, conformity, democracy, aspiration, comedy, capitalism, republicanism, Jews—these constitute the fundamental semantics of the bowler." To say that the bowler hat signifies so much comes close to saying

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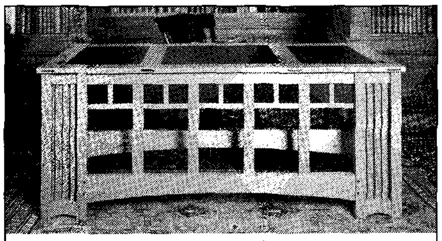

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that it signifies almost nothing. At one moment, Robinson verges on admitting this: "With this kind of popularity, the bowler's referents are in danger of becoming too diffuse to be resonant." But this embarrassing voice is quickly stifled. Robinson's theory is that the bowler can have either of two broad significances: it can represent stylishness and aspiration to social betterment or the machinelike anonymity of the urban mass. In either case, he claims, it is middle-class (a conveniently vague term, encompassing those just below nobility and those just above the proletariat), and thus is an emblem of modern life.

The pursuit of this idea leads Robinson into some interesting byways of cultural and social history, but it can also lure him into overinterpretation. He devotes a good deal of space to Seurat's masterpiece "Bathing at Asnières," in which the figure reclining in the left foreground is wearing a bowler. There may be a formal reason for this: the hat's rounded shape echoes the rounded bare head of the seated bather who is the painting's central figure. But Robinson also demands a meaning, and, arguing with other historians in the hope of finding it, he suggests every reason except the obvious one: that Seurat included the bowler because it is what a Parisian at Asnières might have worn. Part of Seurat's greatness is to give a timeless dignity to a scene of everyday modern life, not as Manet had done in "Olympia" and "Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe" by direct allusion to Titian and the grand tradition, but simply through calmness, monumental composition, and an objectivity that excludes knowing comment. To demand that the bowler here have a meaning is to diminish the painting, to turn it toward the conventional anecdotalism of the nineteenth-century genre picture.

Robinson is much more comfortable with Magritte (who gets a whole chapter to himself), since he certainly did make a point of painting bowler-hatted men over and over again. There is some indecision in those critics who suggest (if Robinson represents them fairly) that these figures are "cookie-cutter people, men of the crowd." After all, these are two different things: the cookie-cutter person is two-dimensional, without reality, while the man in the crowd is every bit as real as you and me, and it is our fault if we fail to see it. The cookie-cutter version seems

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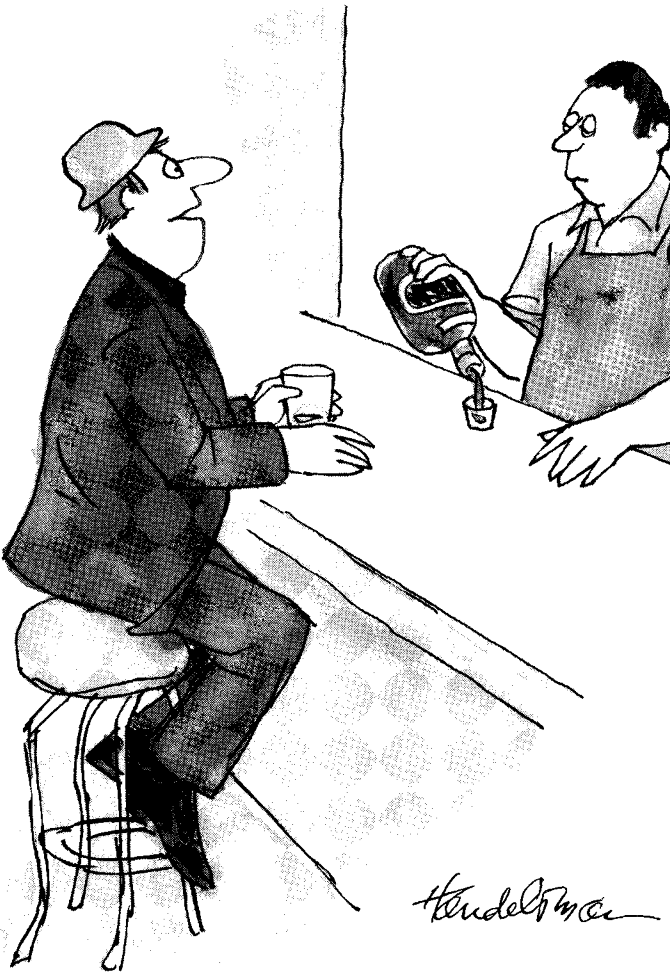

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much the truer one. Robinson tells us that late in life Magritte, imitating his own art, had himself photographed in his house wearing his bowler hat. This is not the behavior of an ordinary man, the man in the crowd, at all: no one wears a bowler at home. But Magritte's scenes are not dreamlike, either: it is the meticulous realism of their technique, so far removed from the vagueness of dream images, that makes their Surreal elements so telling. Dreams call for interpretation, so men have always believed, but perhaps what tantalizes in Magritte is the sense that the Sphinx has no secret—that there is no solution, no key to unlock the allegory. And perhaps the black, blank bowler plays its part in this effect.

Robinson is at his best in discussing Charlie Chaplin and Laurel and Hardy. He argues that the English and the Americans have tended to interpret Chaplin's tramp differently—the English, conscious of his origins in the music hall, tending to regard him as a humble figure with aspirations, the Americans seeing him as a representation of collapsed gentility. Of these interpretations the "English" is surely the better, but neither feels quite right: Chaplin's "tramp," so called, has always seemed a man from nowhere, an outsider without antecedents, arrived from another world. Laurel and Hardy are pretty different in this respect: they have their own social niche, as house-painters, deliverymen, piano movers, or whatever. In the England of Laurel's youth—he came from Lancashire—the foreman always wore a bowler, to distinguish him from his flat-capped workmen, and Laurel and Hardy's bowlers can be read in this way: as claims, threatened with disaster, to a modest artisan status. Laurel himself, though, remarked, "The bowler hat to me has always seemed to be a part of a comic's make-up for as far back as I can remember. I'm sure that's why Charlie wore one. Most of the comics we saw as boys

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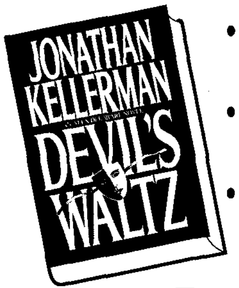

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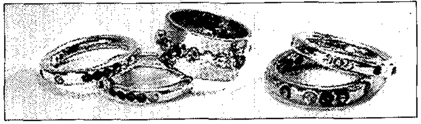

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wore them." So maybe the bowler hats of the film comics have little determinate significance, except as the uniform of their art, like the masks and buskins of the Greek tragic stage. Beckett perhaps wanted to latch on to this tradition, for in their own way Vladimir and Estragon are as far removed from the contingencies of their audience's lives as Oedipus and Agamemnon.

It is curious that Robinson has hardly anything to say about the way the bowler was worn. In "Scouting for Boys," Robert Baden-Powell indicated, with the help of his own drawings, how to tell a fellow's character from the way he wears his hat. Far back on the head: bad at paying his debts. Tilted a long way to one side: a swaggerer. Straight on the head: honest but dull. Slightly tilted: the ideal Boy Scout type, cheerful and charming. It is the style of wearing the hat, not the style of the hat itself, that counts for Baden-Powell: the dullard has a topper, but it might have been a bowler; the cheery charmer wears a bowler, but a boater would have done as well. Robinson includes among his illustrations Weedon Grossmith's drawing, for "The Diary of a Nobody," of Mr. Pooter at the seaside in a "straw helmet," enduring the disdain of his son Lupin, who is smartly dressed and wears a bowler hat. The father has the more frivolous headgear, but he has plonked it down stiffly on his head; Lupin, with tilted bowler, looks much more at ease on the promenade, despite his city clothes. Once more, the bowler is effective through its neutrality: it is what you do with it that counts.

Robinson's idea of using the bowler hat as a basis for "a cultural study of modern life as seen through a sign of its times" is a piquant and imaginative one. The idea is somewhat better than the execution, and the style is stodgy, but he has ferreted out plenty of curious and varied information, he has some nice observations of detail, and he offers a good deal to enlighten and amuse. In "Waiting for Godot," Vladimir fiddles repeatedly with his bowler, taking it off, knocking the crown as if to dislodge some object, peering inside, putting it back on, pulling it off again for another look. . . . "The Man in the Bowler Hat" may seem a little like that: when we look into its grand thesis, we may not find much there, but meanwhile we can enjoy the business. ♦

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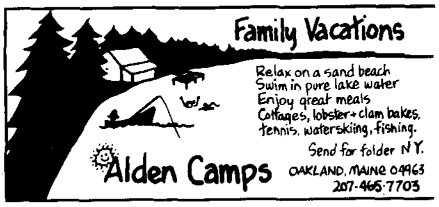

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Translated from the German by John E. Woods with illustrations by Sempé
(Knopf; $17)

As his books arrive in English translation, Süskind seems to be the Wonderful Shrinking Author: the average-size, best-selling "Perfume" was followed by the novella "The Pigeon," and now comes an illustrated tale of childhood which is small enough to read in an hour. With affable divagations and echoes of the Grimms' fables, Süskind explores some typical adventures of preadolescence—tree-climbing, bicycle-riding, piano lessons, a crush on a schoolmate. Through this tenderly, carefully colored tapestry stalks the dark thread of Mr. Summer, a tormented and tireless hiker along the village roads. His mystery is never revealed, and one wonders if "Summer" doesn't have misleadingly mellow connotations in English. Like the pigeon in "The Pigeon," he is an omen of death, whose chill underlies the crystalline clarity of Süskind's prose. Sempé's soft, playful illustration and Woods' flowing translation ably serve that prose; one only wishes that the little volume, which was manufactured in Mexico, weren't so strangely hard to open, and to keep open. It fights the fingers like a mousetrap being set.

Loving Daughters

by Olga Masters
(Norton; $21.95)

It should be taken as a high form of praise to say that this reads like a British novel from an earlier part of this century. It is set right after the First World War, in Australia, to which a young British minister has brought his services. The two most eligible young ladies of the town feel that this sole gentleman of their acquaintance must surely be in want of a wife. Oddly enough, he concurs; he just can't decide between the two beautiful sisters, who live on an idyllically prosperous farm. Enid's garden is famous, her baking takes the prize at the local fair; Una makes their much admired clothes. As it happens, the man's choice is as bad as it could be, with many painful ramifications. "Many people are frightened to be happy," he decides. "If it means being generous, they'd rather be miserable." The book is all quiet prose and homely detail in a circumscribed world, yet one fervently hopes that events will prove the minister's conclusions wrong.

GENERAL

Sister Aimee: The Life of Aimee Semple McPherson

by Daniel Mark Epstein
(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $27.95)

Aimee Semple McPherson was the most successful and probably the most histrionic Pentecostal evangelist of the early twentieth century. She was already famous as an itinerant faith healer when she arrived in Los Angeles, in December of 1918, but there she found her true renown—"for the plain reason," H. L. Mencken wrote, "that there were more morons collected in Los Angeles than in any other place on earth . . . and she was the first comer to give it anything low enough for its taste and comprehension." On a corner in Echo Park, Sister Aimee built the Angelus Temple, home of her Foursquare Gospel organization (which included a prayer tower and a radio station), and home also to Biblical spectacles featuring live camels, macaws, and sheep, and to fiscal rivalries and personal scandal. Sister Aimee, who died in 1944, had a special way with the men in her audience. She has evidently charmed the poet Daniel Mark Epstein, for she is less the subject than the heroine of this empathetic, not to say sentimental, biography. The life and faith of Sister Aimee make a sensational tale, especially when they are recounted as they are here, without skepticism.

The Last Panda

by George B. Schaller
(Chicago; $24.95)

Packing an enormous amount of scientific information into an unobtrusively artful style, Schaller tells us about a panda-research program aimed at producing a policy that would make possible the animal's survival in the wild. The study, which began in 1980, was sponsored jointly by the World Wildlife Fund and the Chinese government, and Schaller describes his own participation in it—his seasons in southwestern China's beautiful, rough mountain country, tracking radio-collared pandas and learning about their activities and their modest needs. The panda's habitat has been shrinking as loggers and farmers continue to clear the bamboo on which the animal feeds, while poachers continue to reduce its numbers: there were about thirteen hundred and fifty wild pandas left in 1988—perhaps too few to prevent its extinction as a wild animal. Schaller explains the reasons that panda protection appears to have failed, conveying human misbehavior with the same impartial accuracy he brings to conveying animal behavior.

The Oldest Dead White European Males

by Bernard Knox
(Norton; $15.95)

A set of three lectures, with a foreword, on the enduring values of Greek literature. As the title suggests, the controversial theme seems forced, like a trick of advertising; otherwise the style is supremely lucid and elegant. In his impatience with barbarians, Knox himself exhibits the undaunted perfection we like to imagine as Greek. But the barbarians here are the "militant feminists" and other multiculturalists who are using the academy to transform our sense of history, and they speak Greek, too. Knox's quarrel with them prevents him from admitting how profoundly the Greeks quarrelled among themselves. The passages of brilliant summary, especially Knox's history of canon formation, are in sharp contrast to the unnecessary apologies for Greek culture. One interest is notably absent from these pages. Knox quotes at length from Louis MacNeice: "And when I should remember the paragons of Hellas/ I think instead/ Of the crooks, the adventurers, the opportunists,/ The careless athletes and the fancy boys." If Knox is obliged to defend Greek culture against the current scholarship, one would like to know what he makes of gay studies, too. ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

STARDATE 12:00 12:00 12:00

BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

"I watch science-fiction movies. . . . I like to watch them on tape, so I can examine them closely. There's only one problem: I still can't figure out my VCR." —William Shatner, in *TV Guide*.

CAPTAIN KIRK: Captain's log, stardate 7412.6 . . . hello? The red light still isn't going on. Testing, 1-2-3-4. Chekov, it's not recording.

CHEKOV: I know, Keptin. Perhaps a negative function with the clock-timer.

UHURA: Captain, I'm getting indications of a Klingon presence.

KIRK: Mr. Spock?

SPOCK: I confirm at least six Imperial Klingon warships, Captain, and heading toward our position at Warp 7.

KIRK: No, the Captain's log. Why won't it record?

SPOCK: Might I suggest, Captain, that we first remove ourselves to a more secure sector and then address the matter of your log? That would be the . . . logical approach.

KIRK: There's nothing logical about this instruction manual. Chekov?

CHEKOV: Keptin?

KIRK: Try this. "With the Rec-On day flashing, press the 5 key."

CHEKOV: I did already, Keptin. *Still* negative function.

SULU: Captain, I'm having difficulty holding course.

KIRK: Shut down engines. Chekov, "Press the number for the day. For Sunday, press the 1 key, for Monday, the 2 key, and so on."

CHEKOV: Affirmative, Keptin. Still negative function. Perhaps ve should go back to page 15, vere it said to press Rec-Off time and enter two digits for hour.

SPOCK: Captain, the Klingons are arming their photon torpedoes.

KIRK: Engineering.

SCOTTY: Aye, Captain?

KIRK: Mr. Scott, we've got a malfunction in the log. We're going to need full deflector power while we get it fixed.

SCOTTY: I canna guarantee it, Captain. The systems are overloaded as it is.

CHEKOV: Keptin, the flashing 12:00 disappeared!

KIRK: Good work, Chekov!

CHEKOV: Den it came right back.

KIRK: Damn it. Analysis, Mr. Spock.

SPOCK: It would appear, Captain, that this instruction manual that you and Mr. Chekov have been attempting to decipher was written in Taiwan.

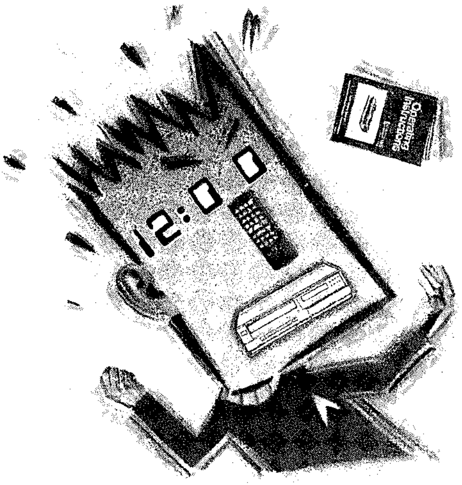
KIRK: Taiwan?

SPOCK: A small island in the Pacific Rim Sector, formerly inhabited by a determined people who believed that the adductor muscles in giant clams, *Tridacna gigas*, conferred sexual potency. In the later twentieth century, they became purveyors of early video equipment to what was then the United States. They were able to successfully emasculate the entire U.S. male population by means of impenetrable instruction manuals. It was this that eventually led to the Great Conflict.

KIRK: But this is 7412.6. How did a Taiwanese instruction manual get aboard the Enterprise?

SPOCK: It is possible that a Taiwanese computer virus was able to infiltrate Star Fleet Instruction Manual Command and subtly alter the books so that not even university-trained humans could understand them.

KIRK: It's diabolical.



SPOCK: On the contrary, it is perfectly logical. Their strategy was based on an ancient form of Oriental persuasion known as water torture. In this case, instead of water a digital rendering of the hour of twelve o'clock is flashed repeatedly and will not disappear until the unit is correctly programmed.

KIRK: And for that you need a manual you can understand.

SPOCK: Precisely. Unless . . .

KIRK: Spit it out, Spock.

SPOCK: You have Star Log Plus. A small device that permitted the Americans to bypass the instruction manuals and program their units so that they would not end up with six hours of electronic snow instead of "Masterpiece Theatre" or, more likely, "American Gladiators."

KIRK: Could you make one of these things, Spock?

SPOCK: It would take more than the one minute and twenty seconds that we have until we are within range of Klingon weapons.

DR. MCCOY: Jim, you know I hate to agree with Spock, but he's right. We've got to get out of here. There are hundreds of people on this ship, young people, with homes and families and futures, and pets—little hamsters on treadmills, Jim. You can't sacrifice them just because you can't figure out how to program your damn log!

KIRK: I know my responsibilities, Bones. Spock, would it be possible to beam the flashing 12:00 into the Klingons' control panel?

SPOCK: Theoretically, yes.

KIRK: Do it.

UHURA: Captain, I'm picking up a Klingon transmission.

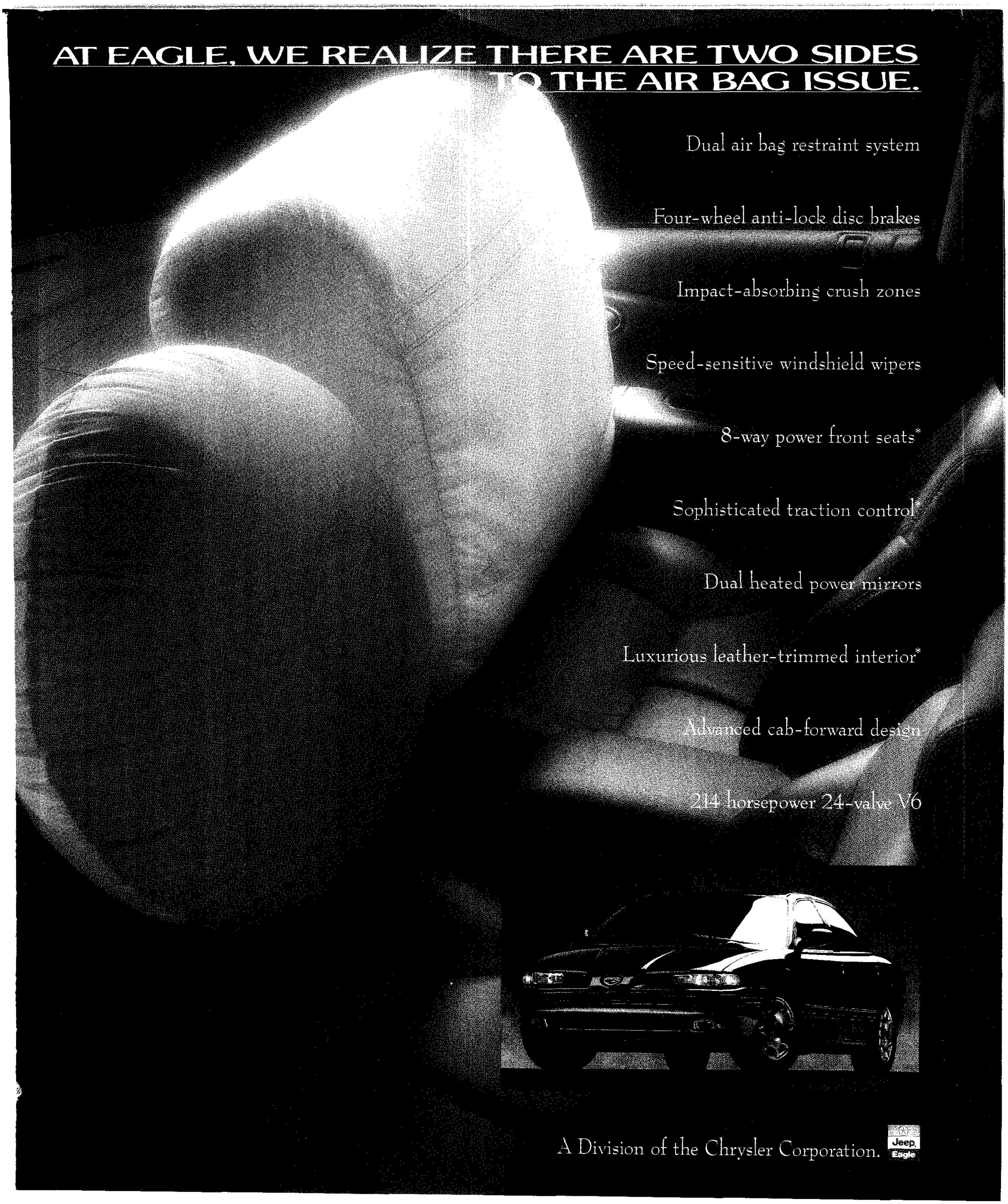
KIRK: Put it on screen.

KLINGONS: QI'yaH, majegh!

KIRK: Translation, Spock.

SPOCK: It appears to have worked, Captain. They are surrendering.

KIRK: Take us home, Mr. Sulu. Mr. Chekov, try pressing the OTR button twice. ♦



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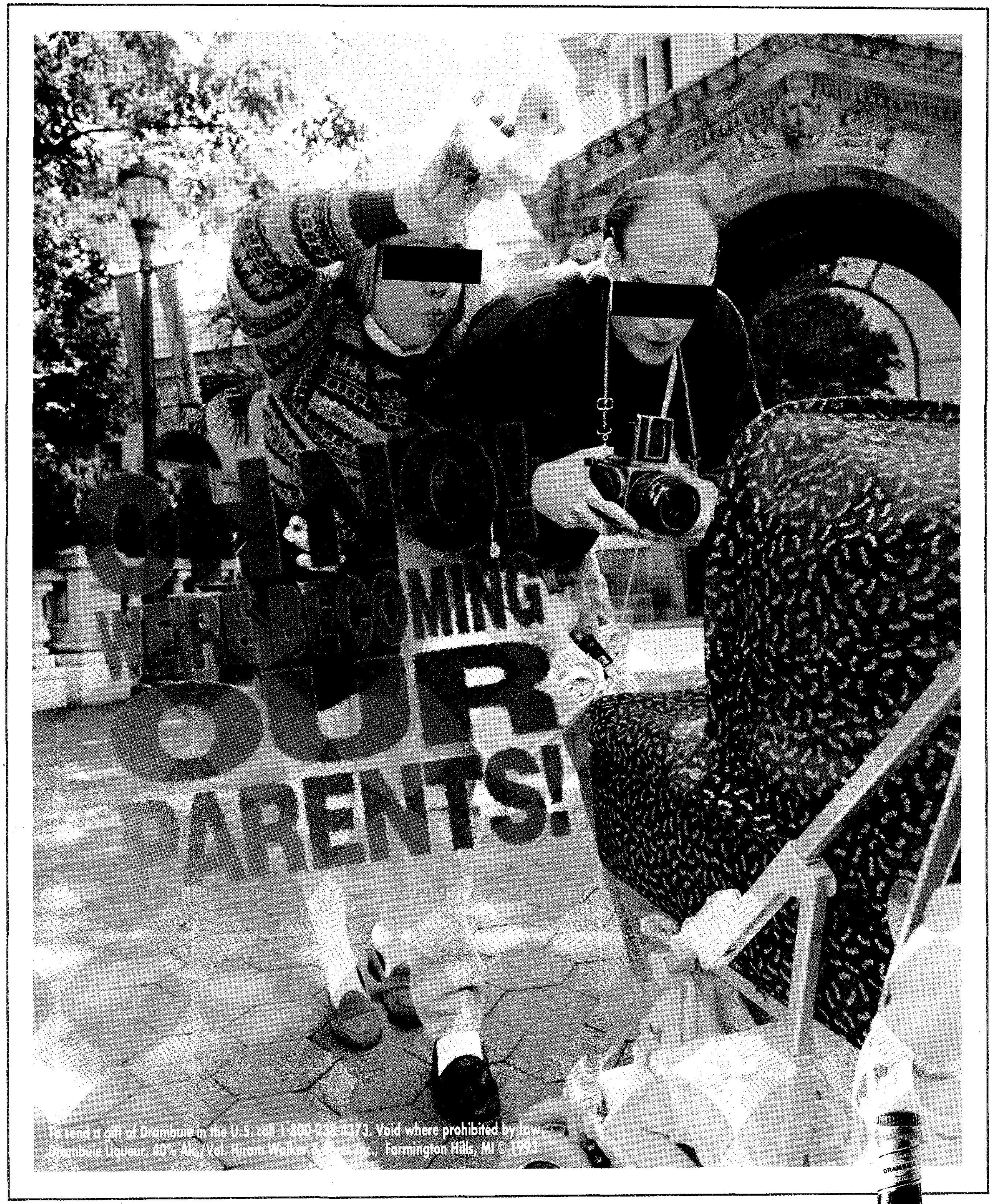
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